TWELVE YEARS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

J. L. STODDARD

/240.227S86T>C1/

22857
Stoddard

St. Procopius
College Library
LISLE, ILL.

Borrowers are responsible for all books taken out on their cards.

Books may be kept for two weeks and renewed once for the same period, except fiction, 7-day, and reserved books.

A fine of one cent per day will be charged on each book which is not returned according to the above rule.

Date Due

Oc 9 '8	NOV 14		
Oc 18 '31	JAN 26		
No 5 '31			
De 17 '31			
Fe 10 '32			
Fe 17 '32			
Mr 8 '32			
Mr 17 '3			
Ap 4 '32			
Se 28 '32			
No 1 '32			
No 29 '32			
De 16 '32			
Ja 20 '33			
Fe 5 '34			
Mar 1 '37			
Dec21 '37			
MAY 6			
MAY 20			
MAY 25			
NOV 1			

No. 293 DEMCO-MADISON-WIS

Twelve Years in the Catholic Church

TWELVE YEARS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

By

JOHN L. STODDARD

AUTHOR OF "REBUILDING A LOST FAITH"

ST. PROCOPIUS COLLEGE LIBRARY LISLE, ILL.

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

NEW YORK

1930

230.26
S86t

NIHIL OBSTAT:
EDUARDUS J. MAHONEY, S.T.D.
Censor deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR:
EDM. CAN. SURMONT,
Vicarius generalis

WESTMONASTERII,
die 12a Maii, 1930.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

22857

Dec 31 30

"Not for the eyes of men
May this day's work be done,
But unto Thee, O God,
That, with a setting sun,
My heart may know the matchless prize
Of sure approval in Thine eyes."

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

THE title, *Twelve Years in the Catholic Church*, may perhaps lead one to anticipate some sensational revelation of experiences of a subjective or objective character. The reader will find in these pages nothing of the kind. The reason for the publication of this book is a very simple one. After a certain time has elapsed, in which the ardour of a convert to Catholicism may be supposed to have cooled, he is sometimes asked by former comrades in agnosticism or sectarian fellowship if he has found the Catholic Church "all he anticipated," and whether he has not experienced disillusions, possibly regret for the step he once "so rashly" took. If, as is almost invariably the case, the convert replies in the negative, the inquirers are disappointed and cannot understand why the fever lasts and the temperature remains high. This little book is intended to be a partial answer to such questioners. What they would like to learn is, first, whether I still believe the doctrines of Christianity in general and the claims of the Catholic Church in particular; and, secondly, whether I am "happy" in my faith, and if so, why? They certainly are not happy; why should I be?

I call this book a *partial* answer to these questions, because the doctrinal part of the subject is too vast to be fully covered in the present volume. Still, I desire, especially in these days of militant Modernism, to reaffirm and justify my continued and even augmented belief in those fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion which are now so savagely denied and doubted, namely, the Divinity of Christ, the reality of His miracles and resurrection, the infallibility of His inspired Church in matters of faith and morals, and the need for the exercise of authority and ultimate decision in those matters by the successor of St. Peter in the Papal See.

In regard to my spiritual "happiness" as a Catholic, I must content myself with the unqualified assurance of the fact and of my gratitude to God for having permitted me to enter the apostolic Catholic Church of Christ; and I also affirm the absence in my heart of even the shadow of a regret that I took the step.

Such sentiments are, however, too sacred to be lightly spoken of. Fervent rhapsodies over inward spiritual feelings have never appealed to me, especially on the printed page.

> ". . . The gods approve
> The depth, but not the tumult of the soul."

Yet, as I am not likely, as an octogenarian, to write anything more about this subject, I wish—before it is too late—to bear my testimony

to the blessed peace which the unity, authority, and sacraments of the holy apostolic Catholic Church have given me, and still give me; and I daily pray:

Let no dark clouds of doubt conceal
  The radiance of the setting sun;
Thy constant presence, Lord, reveal
  Until the sands of life are run.

And may each day which still is given
  More closely knit my heart to Thine—
A prelude to the joy of heaven,
  A foretaste of the love divine.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Preface	ix
I.	Past and Present	1
II.	Did Christ claim to be the Son of God?	18
III.	Was Jesus Miraculous or Non-Miraculous?	33
IV.	The Authenticity of the Gospels	48
V.	The Teaching Church	67
VI.	Catholic versus Secular Education	75
VII.	The Persecuted Church	87
VIII.	The Church of the Catacombs	103
IX.	The Church of Authority	119
X.	Why Rome could not go to Lausanne	141
XI.	From my Portfolio	152

Twelve Years in the Catholic Church

Chapter I

PAST AND PRESENT

A modern critic recently declared to one whom he regarded as an obscurantist: "Modernism can afford to wait, for time is fighting on our side." To which the answer was made: "But eternity fights on ours."

ON the threshold of my eightieth year, I pause to look back on the latest stadium of my life, a period of fourteen years. And why this period only? Because it is the only one in which I have consciously lived in the presence of eternity, the only one in which I have seriously considered the reason of my existence, the purpose of my creation, and my responsibility, first to my Maker, then to my fellow-voyagers sailing on a tiny planet through a limitless, uncharted sea. Fourteen years ago, I suddenly awoke from a fool's paradise, a child's playground. The toys which I had cherished became worthless; the gods that I had worshipped tottered on feet of clay. The war had shattered my reliance on the civilization I had thought secure. Despair and disillusionment succeeded a complacent optimism. Night had replaced the day. The garish light which hitherto had satisfied my earth-bound gaze was suddenly extinguished. Darkness enveloped me.

But presently I found that the removal of that dazzling light enabled me to see . . . the stars; to peer beyond the planet's rim into the infinite depths of a universe brilliant with suns, all unimaginably distant and moving silently and swiftly in their allotted paths, in absolute obedience to the law that also regulates upon our earth the falling of a leaf. With their overwhelming proofs of a supreme Intelligence directing them, these countless luminaries seemed to me to be

> "For ever singing, as they shine;
> 'The Hand that made us is divine.'"

* * * * * *

The contrast between this inconceivable immensity and my own littleness, between the eternal and the ephemeral, between a bound-

less ocean and a drop of water, led me to seek the explanation of the universe. Seated amid the ruins of my shattered illusions, and with the ceaseless rumbling in my ears of distant cannon, day and night, reminding me of human massacre and material destruction, I thought with loathing of that shallow atheistic and agnostic propaganda of the mid-Victorian scientists, of which I had been a youthful victim. Like the prodigal in the Gospel, I had been feeding on husks that formed the food of swine, and I was hungry for the nourishment which I knew was plentiful in my Father's house. At last, therefore, I resolved to go unto my Father and to say to Him : " Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am no longer worthy to be called Thy son. Make me as one of Thy hired servants. Thou hast said : 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' Father, I have lost my faith ; I have sometimes even doubted Thy existence. Help me, or I perish. The night is dark and I am far from home. Lead me into the light ! "

And when I was still afar off, my Father saw me and came to me, and, as I fell on my knees before Him, He lifted me up, supported me, and led me tenderly to the home for which I yearned. It was the eleventh hour, but He told me it was not too late for me to enter and to work for Him. " But," I faltered, " what can I do ? I am now nearly blind." In response, He touched my eyes and lo ! the darkness of ten years vanished, and I saw again the world of nature and of letters. And I fell upon my knees and worshipped Him, and said : " Father, what wilt Thou have me do ? " And He said : " *Rebuild for yourself and others what you have cast down.*" And I obeyed, and have been working in His vineyard ever since, and pray that I may labour thus unto the end. If one were called from earth while writing a noble thought, what a beautiful death !

* * * * * *

I very soon realised that to reconstruct a faith in God, in Christ, in Revelation and in a life beyond the grave—a faith that I had once possessed, then lost and lived without for nearly half a century—was impossible without divine assistance. I was appalled by the spiritual sterility caused by my wasted years. I therefore cried to God to help me to regain, not a mere speculation, based on private judgement and disputed by a multitude of sects, but faith in a Revelation made by Jesus Christ Himself. Upon that Rock I begged almighty God to set my feet and to furnish me with good and sufficient reasons for the faith that I should thus acquire. I knew, however, that I must do my part in this. Faith is indeed a gift, bestowed by divine grace, but it is not forced upon anyone. We are taught that sufficient faith to ensure salvation is freely offered

to every soul, but the first step towards acquiring it is to wish for it and to ask for it.

> "'Tis heaven alone that is given away;
> 'Tis only God may be had for the asking."

* * * * * *

There are degrees of faith, as there are degrees of holiness; but these differences are due to more or less clearness of perception or depth of devotion, rather than to the number of dogmas believed. How much faith is necessary for salvation has, I think, never been defined. Some saint has written that it is heresy to affirm positively that any particular soul has gone to perdition, for we cannot know, nor has it ever been revealed that any such soul has been lost. Our Lord prayed for the forgiveness of those who tortured Him and mocked Him in His agony, on the plea that they were ignorant of what they were doing. It is impossible to think that that supreme request was denied. And how many of us also sin and disbelieve through ignorance! The Catholic Church teaches that the gates of mercy are wide and that they stand ever open.

It is not intellectual conviction that causes us to pass within them. If that were the test, faith would be limited to the learned, or at least to the reflecting portion of mankind, which is an infinitesimal minority. It often happens that, although the mind is persuaded, the heart still rebels. The truth may be revealed convincingly enough to the intellect, but some long-seated vice may control the *will*. In this case the hindrance is purely a moral one. "Thousands of sceptics," says de Coussoles, "have been converted and have even sealed their faith with their own blood. Why? Did they behold a miracle? Did they have proofs that others were not aware of? Did the dead rise from the grave to instruct them? No; *they abandoned their passions*. Do likewise, and you will believe as they did."

But since intellectual conviction of the truth is not *conversion*, something more is needed, and that is *faith*, without which, St. Paul tells us, it is impossible to please God. And what is this faith? It is something more than trust or confidence, or even a religious inclination of the heart. It is a *voluntary* devout and unquestioning acceptance of the Revelation of Christ's Divinity, His precepts and the authoritative and unchanging teachings of the Church He founded.

When once we are convinced that Jesus Christ was the Son of the Living God, and that His Revelation and precepts have been faithfully reported to us, it is not our business to quibble or dispute about them, but to give to them the full consent of our intellect.

We have then to do three things only: accept, obey, and adore.

* * * * * *

In a previous book, entitled *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*, I described the slow and difficult process of reconstructing my own lost faith. What I now desire to do, after an interval of a dozen years, is to review the conclusions I then formed and, in the light of subsequent experience, observation, and study, to renew my loyal adhesion to those conclusions, if I can conscientiously do so; and also to consider several new objections on the part of hostile critics and, if possible, to refute them. To do this adequately would require more time and labour than are now at my disposal. But I can at least state briefly and concisely what my conclusions are, hoping that even in this meagre form they may possess some value; for, though the author cannot claim to be a trained theologian, still as a young man, he studied for two years in a theological seminary, and for the last twelve years at least has done little else than read, investigate, and write upon such subjects, and has translated into English from the French and German two voluminous masterpieces of theological apologetics, as well as several books on ecclesiastical history and biography. In these valuable works of distinguished Biblical scholars and theologians the criticisms made by the enemies of Christianity are stated and documented with no less accuracy and fairness than are their refutations by Christianity's defenders; and, since the translation of such reasonings from one tongue into another necessitates a consideration of practically every word, in order to render in a new idiom the exact meaning of the original, there is a certain significance in saying, as I now do, that the conclusions which, in 1917, induced me to return to my Christian faith and to enter the Roman Catholic Church, have been by all these studies and translations strengthened a hundredfold.*

* * * * * *

* Since 1917 Mr. Stoddard has not only written and published an account of his own mental and spiritual journey to the Church, entitled *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*, but has translated a notable work in two volumes of about five hundred pages each, from the German of Dr. Hilarin Felder, O.Cap., of Fribourg, Switzerland, called in the original, *Jesus Christus, eine Apologie seiner Messianität und Gottheit gegenüber der neuesten ungläubigen Jesus-Forschung*, but bearing the English title, *Christ and the Critics* (Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., London). He has also translated into English from the French the theological masterpiece of Père Ferdinand Prat, S.J., also a work of two large volumes, with a vast amount of documentary evidence and scholarly erudition contained in extensive footnotes, entitled in the original, *La Théologie de Saint Paul* (Burns Oates & Washbourne). These

It is true, in my early manhood and even in many of my maturer years, I held a contrary opinion. But if I have changed my mind in this respect, the fact is due—apart from the grace of God—to a more thorough study of the subject. My first conclusions were based on insufficient evidence. My education in such matters, even in a Protestant theological seminary, had been so superficial and conventional, that the roots of my belief had no retaining soil; and when the flood of scepticism, "higher criticism," and the scientific onslaught of the 'seventies and 'eighties struck me, my faith collapsed, and I was swept completely off my feet and carried far out into a sea of doubt from which I did not find my way back for nearly two score years. A life-preserver, in the form of the authoritative instruction of the Roman Catholic Church, might then have saved me, if I had possessed it, but I did not possess it. In fact, I was so poisoned by the usual propaganda against the Catholic Church that I actually deemed that great depositary and teacher of Christ's doctrines unworthy of my notice! Had I ever read a Catholic book? No. Had I ever conversed with a Catholic priest? No. Had I ever listened to a Catholic sermon? No. How many Catholic friends did I have? None. What did I really know of the Roman Catholic Church from observation, study, and experience? Nothing. Was I not, therefore, a typical Protestant ignoramus in such matters? I was.

Having gone adrift from my old orthodox moorings, I floundered helplessly about, supported first by one and then by another of many denominational spars, belonging to various sects, born from some private interpretations of the Bible. Every shipwrecked castaway could take his choice of a floating derelict. These I soon found, however, unsatisfactory, and abandoned them for a good-sized raft, on which a group of Rationalists was sailing under a banner bearing the legend: "Mistakes of Moses." We were a motley crew. Some were undoubtedly cultivated and intelligent; others were wild-eyed and "intense," with hair like Buffalo Bill's, while some of the women had anticipated the present fashion of bobbed hair. I asked them whither they were bound, but nobody could tell me. All were, however, intent upon something. Some were dredging for protoplasm,

---

four volumes required on the part of the translator four years of almost uninterrupted labour.

In addition to these, Mr. Stoddard has translated from the French a volume by M. Antonin Eymieu, entitled, *Two Arguments for Catholicism* (Burns Oates & Washbourne); *The Life of St. Paul*, in one volume, by Père Prat; *The Life of Saint Gregory the Great*, by Monsignor Batiffol, and *Le Vieillard*, by Monsignor Baunard, translated and condensed under the title of *The Evening of Life*, besides some other books of similar character, but of less importance.—[*Publishers' Note.*]

as the source of life. Others were hunting for errors in the Bible and shouting with delight when they concluded they had found one. Others still were clipping from the newspapers scandalous reports about ministers and priests. But all were principally anxious to discover, somewhere on the voyage, "the missing link." If its remains could be found near Boston, it would be worth dying for. In any case, they longed to establish, on indisputable proof, the fact that they were descendants of *Pithecanthropus erectus*, or other similar simian ancestor; for then the entire Christian theory of Man's creation, fall, and redemption by the Incarnate Son of God could be discarded as absurd.

* * * * * *

Upon the raft was a library. I was humiliated by my lack of acquaintance with its many volumes written by German Biblical critics. Their contents were a mystery, for I could not then read German. Neither could most of my fellow-voyagers, but this, at the time, I did not know. I thought them wiser than myself. I hope they were. A few of these works were, it is true, translated into English, and I, of course, found there also Darwin's *Descent of Man*, Paine's *Age of Reason*, English versions of Renan and Strauss, and a multitude of polemical pamphlets. Most of the literary ammunition usable for ordinary conversation and for the quick-firing guns of argumentative repartee was furnished by Ingersoll's *Lectures*, the sermons of radical Unitarian ministers, the discourses of "Free-Thinkers," and by several journalistic pop-guns, one of which was called *The Index*. From this I was allowed to fire a few shots. I think the casualties were few. What surprises me now, as I recall those men and things, is the immense credulity we showed for every article, book, or oral statement that aided the destructive criticism of the Bible and upheld the code of Agnosticism, which taught that nothing can be known of the unseen, supernatural, and spiritual.

Nothing seemed too absurd if it was only anti-Christian. We had one standard of judgement. Those who thought as we did were enlightened; those who differed from us were imbeciles. We meant well, but we had the greatest of all faults—to be conscious of none.

Perhaps the greatest proof of man's stupidity and arrogance is his conviction that the measure of his intellectual perceptions is the measure of the universe, and that what he does not see and understand does not exist. That wise old sceptic, Montaigne, well said: "Sometimes there happens to people of real intelligence that which happens to ears of wheat, which go on growing and holding their heads proudly erect, *so long as they are empty;* but when, in

their maturity, they are filled and are big with grain, they begin to lower their heads in humility."

* * * * * *

At the time of which I write "Infidel Lectures" were very popular, and of course we went to hear them. It was customary for these orators to belittle Jesus by ridiculing everything about Him which pertained to the supernatural, and they had a condescending way of remarking: "There is nothing new or original, you know, in His revelation and doctrine. He was a child of His age, a true son of His people, subject to its prejudices, superstitions and errors." But such a statement is profoundly incorrect. The very reverse of it is true. Take, for example, the central feature of Jewish faith and hope, the belief in the Messianic deliverer who was to come. Jesus did not at all accept the prevalent notion of what this Messiah was to be, and aroused thereby a hatred and hostility that finally cost Him His life. Not only this; He showed from first to last an inflexible opposition to most of the current popular opinions of His race. The Pharisees asked His disciples in disdain: "Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" They were scandalized. But Jesus, hearing it, said: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill." Of His generation He exclaimed: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgement and condemn it"; and again: "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I suffer you?" He took particular care to work many of His miracles on the Sabbath Day, in order to prove that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."*

This was regarded by the Pharisees as such a crime, that they took counsel how they could put Him to death.† To these and other powerful leaders of the Jews, He uttered terrible denunciations: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men . . . Woe to you, blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe to you, because you make clean the outside of the cup and the dish; but within you are full of uncleanness . . . Whited sepulchres! outwardly, indeed, you appear beautiful, but within you are full of filthiness . . . You serpents, you generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgement of hell?" This does not sound very much like the utterances of a "mere child of his age"!

Read again the Sermon on the Mount and observe how Jesus presents repeatedly such contrasts as the following: "You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But *I* say unto you," etc. etc. When the people wished to take Him by force and make Him a king, Jesus departed into the

* Mark ii. 27. † Mark iii. 6.

wilderness. He wept over Jerusalem precisely because He was *not* a "child of his age," and because that age had not recognized the time of its visitation. "Hadst thou but known!" He said pathetically, as He foresaw its doom.

That He did not teach scientific facts to the people, opening their eyes to cosmic conditions for which they were totally unprepared, is perfectly comprehensible. Scientific instruction was not the object of His mission, which was purely spiritual. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Christ's uncompromising firmness in opposing the moral and religious errors of His time is a proof that He was far from being an adherent of that epoch's views, save as He found them in accord with His own teachings. He loved His native land and shed tears in view of its approaching ruin, yet He was no mere narrow and exclusive Hebrew. Far above all petty chauvinism, He belonged to no one people and to no one age. He was not national in His outlook on the world, but universal. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold," He said. "Go you into *all the world* and preach the Gospel *to every creature*."

* * * * * *

Another favourite method of attacking Christianity and the Catholic Church on the part of those agnostic lecturers was a sneering disparagement of Christian history, and particularly that of the Middle Ages. It was the custom, fifty years ago, to speak of that historic period contemptuously. The ribald critics made merry over it. To them the era, when the followers of Christ were evangelizing and civilizing Europe, was a "Millennium of darkness," the "dark ages." Michelet called it "a thousand years without a bath." The Anglican "Book of Homilies" expressly states that the Catholic Church "remained in damnable idolatry for more than eight hundred years." If that be true, what was the fate of all the Christians who received the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ during that long period of "damnable" error in the bosom of the Church that He had founded? How can we explain the inability of the Holy Ghost to prevent such a deplorable departure from the apostolic faith and practices?

Gradually the world became aware of its mistake. The immense intellectual, moral, material, and artistic work accomplished from the sixth to the sixteenth century is amazing. It was the glorious Age of Faith; the age of the cathedral-builders, the creators of the Minsters of Cologne, Amiens, Ulm, York, Canterbury, Milan, and many more, and of the abbeys and monasteries, the ruins of which still charm us with their marvellous proportions and matchless

* Luke xix. 10.

ornamentation. It was the age of art, the themes of which were practically all religious. It was the age of Dante and Aquinas, and many more of the greatest men and grandest intellects the world has ever known; it was the age of missions, when Pope Gregory the Great (604) sent several of his monks to convert the inhabitants of Britain to Christianity, and when his colleagues and their successors promoted the evangelization and catholicization of England. "The conquest of Britain," writes Gibbon,* "reflects less glory on the name of Cæsar than on that of Gregory I. For this purpose Cæsar disembarked six legions on the British coast; Gregory needed only forty monks."†

It was the age of university building. The great universities of Europe—those of Rome, Bologna, Perugia, Padua, Pisa, Florence, Ferrara, Naples, Paris, Toulouse, Orleans, Montpellier, Poitiers, Avignon, Grenoble, Louvain, Valladolid, Salamanca, Lisbon, Prag, Cracow, Vienna, Oxford, Cambridge, Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt, Leipzig, Rostock, Trier, Freiburg, Basel, Ingolstadt, Mainz, Tübingen, Wittenberg, and Frankfurt on the Oder—were all founded by Catholics, most of them by Popes, long before the Reformation!

Montalembert has truly said of the Middle Ages: "In public, as well as in private life . . . what is especially noticeable is its strength and grandeur of soul. What abounds in it is its great characters and distinguished individuals. In this consists the true and incontestable superiority of the Middle Ages. It was an epoch fecund in men—'Magna Parens virum.'"‡

Macaulay has said that if, in the Middle Ages, the monasteries had not been scattered broadcast over the soil of Europe, society would have consisted only of beasts of burden and beasts of prey.

Charles Eliot Norton has also given a noble tribute to this historic period in his *Cathedral Building in the Middle Ages* (p. 15): "A people began to be united, as members of a vast moral and spiritual commonwealth, under one universally acknowledged, supreme authority. It sufficed to hold the greater part of Europe in a common allegiance, in spite of differences of race, tradition, language, customs, and internecine wars . . . The Church was the great popular institution of the Middle Ages, cheering and protecting the poor and friendless . . . In times when lord and serf were farthest apart, when the latter had no rights but those of the beasts which perish, the Church read the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and declared the equality of man in the presence of God."

* *Decline and Fall*, XLV, ed. Bury, 1901, V. 36.
† *Life of St. Gregory the Great*, Batiffol, p. 223.
‡ *Monks of the West*, Int. CCLVI.

If that was an age of "damnable idolatry," let us pray for more of its spirit.

* * * * * *

Were not the arguments of the radical lecturers refuted? They were, and often by able orators, but we did not go to hear them. We thought we knew what they would say and disbelieved it in advance! Nor were we the only ones who acted thus unfairly. The Christian apologists had for the most part only Christian auditors, *who were already convinced.* Even these were not so numerous as they should have been.

It is a melancholy fact that those who use their talents in attacking Christianity, and especially in maligning the Catholic Church, are usually sure of full houses and large book-sales, while Christian defenders of the Faith see their books remain unread or speak to empty benches. A clergyman who addresses the public from the lecture platform has, as a rule, little success; but the opponents of Christianity draw crowds. One reason for this is that the infidels are aided, praised, and advertised by their fellow-rationalists, while Christians often treat their champions with indifference.

At all events, we were among the multitudes who flocked to hear the scoffers. What we wanted to have the speaker tell us was that to be religious was to be hysterical; that to be devout was to be a fanatic; that creeds are matters of opinion, mostly nonsense; that conscience is apprehension of punishment; that prayer is a farce, immortality a delusion, heaven a hashish dream, and morality a tribal inheritance; also that man's instinct is an "irresistible" impulse, and, according to some modern professors, the only guide for human conduct; which, of course, removes man's responsibility for sin, makes punishment unjustifiable and gives unbridled licence to the passions. We wanted to be told that the soul was merely the sum of the intellectual faculties, having no distinct entity and therefore destined to perish with the body. We laughed over the parody of an agnostic's prayer: "God (if thou dost exist), bring my soul (if I have one) to eternal life (if there be any)," but we did not appreciate the tragedy of such a state of mind. The only torch that could illumine the stretch of life still left us had been blown out by windy orators. We had nothing to venerate, nothing to believe.

Yet this hopeless creed did not produce a depressing effect upon us as might have been expected. The truth is, we enjoyed too good health to worry much about the future. We were fair-weather sailors at the beginning of our voyage. Motor-cars had not yet been invented, and life seemed tolerably secure. The young fox that plays fearlessly with its brothers and sisters in their parents' home,

feels very differently when he is running for his life before a pack of hounds. Religious doubts are perhaps endurable when, in the fullness of youth and health, death seems a remote event; but when sickness appears, as the possible herald of the end, scepticism and uncertainty assume a different and even terrible aspect. Suffering, whether bodily or spiritual, often produces a wonderful transformation of character. Beaconsfield tells us that "there is no education like adversity"; and Canon Sheehan beautifully says, "All the finest faculties of our nature remain dormant, until they wake under the sharp accolade of pain . . . The mint and thyme give out their perfume only when bruised."

But we knew nothing as yet of illness or pain. We were the gayest passengers on the raft. Officially, we assumed the air of blasé, worn-out, haggard truth-seekers, who after years of investigation (we were all of us in the twenties !) had given up the quest in despair.

I had a friend who usually met me with a pained expression and the words, "Have you any light?" To which I answered in a hollow tone, "None; and you?" To-day this conversation would suggest a request for a match or a cigarette. But in the dialect of that time it signified: "Have you gained any information on the subject of the immortality of the soul?" Having exchanged these doleful confidences, we blithely went to lunch. We doubted the possibility of a future life, but our appetites were not diminished by such a trifle as that. We called Christianity humbug, considered all religions equally worthless, and most of the human race deluded, but our sleep was nevertheless sound and, when awake, we were irrepressibly jovial. Were we then hypocritical *poseurs?* No; for we thought ourselves sincere; moreover, it was fashionable then to be sceptical, and our rationalism was, after all, of the most superficial character. We drew comparisons between Jesus, Buddha, Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, always unfavourable to Jesus; but what we really knew of ethical systems and comparative religion was absurdly little. Of course we read and quoted Omar Khayyám, as faithfully as a Christian reads the *Imitatio Christi*, and yet we rose from the great Persian's pessimistic verses as gay as larks. Philosophy was one thing, but life was another. We therefore repeated:

> "Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
> Before we too into the dust descend,"

and liked especially Omar's apostrophe to wine. But that was before Prohibition became law in America!

* * * * * *

Heaven help the timid Christian who then attempted to confute us! I remember overwhelming one poor soul by sneeringly alluding

to the authenticity of the fourth Gospel as "entirely discredited by every well-informed man to-day." I had read this assertion somewhere and hence believed that St. John's Gospel was not the genuine, trustworthy work of the apostle, not because I knew anything about the history, tradition, and exegesis of the book, but because *I did not want to believe it genuine.* We also liked to bombard simple people with the names of the great German Bible critics, Baur, Pfleiderer, De Witte, Jülicher, and the rest. The title "Tübingen School" (pronounced with great stress on the umlaut), as these erudite sceptics were called, had an especially withering effect. Our wretched victims writhed under it. Yet few of us could have told with certainty in just what part of Germany the University of Tübingen was situated, and none of us had read more than fragmentary quotations from those scholars' works, and in translations only. It was not until many years later that I began to read and study their arguments in the original, as well as the refutation of their theories by scholars abler than the critics themselves.

* * * * * *

What impresses me, as I look back upon that period of my life, is the fact that the attitude of superior intellectuality which we young agnostics assumed is practically the same as that now held by our leading Modernists, including several scientists, who utter their professorial judgements to applauding students on topics—particularly theological and exegetical ones—of which they have little knowledge and hence no legitimate right to speak authoritatively.

There is in human nature a spirit of destruction which incites men, not only to reduce to ruins works of utility and beauty, but even to destroy religious faith and supernatural comfort, and thus create a state of spiritual anarchy. This spirit, which seems often demoniacal, assails and overmasters men from time to time, like attacks of epilepsy. The Occident had such an outburst fifty years ago. We have one now.

This school of Modernists, which has waxed bolder and more numerous in the last few years, is, strictly speaking, far from being modern. The denial of Christ's divinity, His virgin birth, His miracles and His resurrection is as old as Christianity itself. Such denials represent the various heresies which the Church of Christ has one by one refuted, defeated, and survived. The gates of hell have not prevailed against her and will not prevail, although repeated sorties through those gates are often made. But people of to-day have little time to look into the past, and question the modernity of what is labelled "New." They might, however, look into at least one book, which should not be too far beyond their reach, and read what "the disciple whom Jesus loved" wrote of this Modernist

spirit nearly two thousand years ago. In his first Epistle Saint John says: "Who is a liar but *he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?* He that denieth the Father *and the Son* is Antichrist. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."* "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come: and even now already it is in the world."† "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, dwelleth in him and he in God."‡ This language of St. John is certainly not ambiguous.

* * * * * *

For the moment at least the Modernists are making—in England especially—many proselytes. Thousands of Anglicans know not what to believe. Bishops denounce one another. The Archbishop of Canterbury is helpless; his authority is practically *nil*, and the decisive word in Anglican Church affairs is uttered by the heterogeneous House of Commons, which represents all shades of belief and unbelief. In 1921, in a convocation of Anglicans in Birmingham, Bishop Gore deplored the increase of Modernism among the clergy and laity of the Church of England, and said that some of these entertained ideas concerning the existence and attributes of God which were "*fundamentally subversive of the whole fabric of Christian belief.*" There were, he continued, many of the officials of that Church, "who hold views which—I say it deliberately—are directly subversive of the creeds."

Now Bishop Gore is not given to making loose or unfounded statements. Hence, if we accept these words as true, as we are justified in doing, we must conclude that some of the authoritative spiritual directors of the Church of England, who are still in possession of the highest ecclesiastical positions, are engaged in undermining the "whole fabric of the Christian belief."

The situation has not changed for the better in the eight years which have elapsed since that convention took place; for recently the much-discussed Bishop of Birmingham asserted that a belief in nature-miracles is no longer tenable. Whereupon a prominent divine *of the same Church*, Canon Carnegie, charged him with heresy, and said: "There can be no manner of doubt that the tenets which the Anglican Church indicates, and *the acceptance of which she requires as a condition for her membership*, include belief in the actual occurrence of at least one nature-miracle of a momentous character. That miracle is Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead. How comes it then, that one of her official representatives—who must,

* i. 22–23. † iv. 3. ‡ iv. 15.

at his ordination, have avowed his acceptance of this belief—speaking now from the vantage-point of his official position, should feel himself at liberty to declare that beliefs of this kind are no longer tenable? " It comes from the fact that the Church of England has no uniform belief and no authority to enforce it, if it did have it. Canon Carnegie then goes on to state that this implication is little less than disastrous, because it means that, " in the ecclesiastical province, powerful Christian influences do not always dispose those affected by them to recognize the sanctity of the plighted promise or the responsibility of official trust."

* * * * * *

In reading the assertions of the so-called Modernists, I always feel that, in respect to theological and exegetical scholarship, they are far inferior to the anti-Christian critics of the last century.

Such Modernist leaders as the Anglican bishops of Durham and Birmingham, Dean Inge of St. Paul's, Rev. Dr. Major, some American Episcopal clergymen, Prof. Harry Barnes, and others in America, and the rationalistic representative of Protestantism in Germany, Adolf Harnack, are no doubt men of scholarly attainments, but what well-informed student of their writings would seriously place any of them—with the exception of Harnack—on the same intellectual level of Biblical research and exegesis as that of most of the critical controversalists of seventy years ago, among whom were such master-minds of unbelief as Strauss and Renan and the Titans of the Tübingen School, who, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, wrought such havoc in popular Christian belief?

Yet these men have now been practically refuted and their theories disproved; and so effectually that the enemies of Christ have changed their ground and methods of attack. We shall consider these presently. For the moment, it is enough to say that the majority of Modernists airily but groundlessly assume that the fundamental elements of the Christian creed have been disproved. Such is not the fact. The evidences, for example, for the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels stand on a firmer foundation to-day than ever before, as thorough students of the subject know. I particularly recommend to those who wish to ascertain the latest results of Biblical criticism and exegesis, the admirable work of Dr. Hilarin Felder of Fribourg, Switzerland, the English title of which is *Christ and the Critics.*

Some of these Modernist prelates consider themselves superior to the most of their parishioners and do not hesitate to say so. Dean Inge of St. Paul's, for example, affirms that Modernists should not be obliged to entertain the same beliefs which the average Christian holds. In 1924, at the Oxford Conference of Modern Churchmen,

he said: "It is enough for us to claim that a standardized orthodoxy, adapted to the supposed mental calibre of the majority, *ought not to be imposed upon everybody.*"

But is their superiority a sufficient excuse for imposing their peculiar theological views upon others, in defiance of the Creed they have sworn to maintain? Why do they feel obliged to give to their less enlightened co-religionists, instead of the bread of life, the stone of science, and for the wonderful portrait of Jesus drawn by the Evangelists, a composite caricature? Why bring their parishioners into the same house of confusion in which they find themselves? In fact, why not keep their mental reservations private, so long as they retain their pulpits and repeat the Creed?

* * * * * *

My object in this volume is to reaffirm my beliefs of twelve years ago and to indicate to some extent my reasons for retaining them. What reason have I to suppose that anyone will care to know them? None, except the fact that converts to Catholicism are often confronted with tentative questions as to whether they do not "regret the step they took," whether they are not "unhappy," and if they have not experienced many disillusionments. It is usually plain that such questioners entertain a secret hope that the deluded "Papists" will come out and make some sensational disclosures. If for no other reason, therefore, it is perhaps well for a convert, after a sufficient time has elapsed, to declare himself.

As, therefore, I considered my position after twelve years of Catholic experience, I asked myself the following questions:

1. After twelve years of further study and reflection, am I still convinced that Jesus actually claimed to be the Son of God, and that others, especially the writers of the Gospels, ascribed to Him that honour?

2. Do I still believe that Jesus displayed visible miraculous proofs in substantiation of His claim?

3. Do I still believe that the documents which relate Christ's history are authentic and true?

4. Do I still regard the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church as the divinely appointed guardian of the truth committed to its care by Jesus Christ, with a command to teach and to explain that truth until the end of time?

It will be observed that these questions are directly concerned with Jesus Christ, as the incarnate Son of God. This is because they are just now being vehemently answered in the negative, even by ministers and members of the non-Catholic churches; and Catholics especially cannot let such unwarranted statements go unchallenged. At present, Christendom is dividing itself into two camps, whose

slogans are respectively, "For Christ" and "Against Christ." Outside of these two militant groups swarms the great multitude of modern hedonists, who are essentially pagans. Like Gallio, they "care for none of these things," and share the animal's indifference to everything beyond the grave. The combatants of one of these camps believe that Jesus was divine; those of the other assert that He was merely human. The former look upon His virgin birth, His miracles, and His resurrection as proofs of His divinity; the latter spurn the entire supernatural element ascribed to Him.

This lively interest in Jesus of Nazareth, and the continual conflicts in regard to Him, amaze our Neo-Pagans, especially the semi-godless rising generation, which, unbelievably ignorant of the Christian religion, do not understand "what it is all about." The headlines in their newspapers and the casual quotations from the remarks of newly fledged professors have led them to suppose that Christ had been at last disposed of, and that Christianity itself, corroded by vindictive criticism, had become moribund. But all the modern attempts to destroy Christianity are only repetitions of nineteen centuries of failure; and every time that the death of Christ has been announced, there has been a resurrection!

The truth is that this central figure of all history cannot be ignored. The great illusion of our age is that we can do without Him, and that we can destroy His Church. We can do neither. This wonderful Personality, cradled in a manger, dying on a cross, and buried in a sepulchre charitably offered by a friend, still dominates the world. What are we to do with Him? He cannot be ignored. He cannot be eliminated. He is the central personality of all history. His character from first to last is a unit of perfection. It is indisputable that He lived on earth. He certainly was not a human invention. For, if so, who was the inventor? If Jesus did not preach the Sermon on the Mount and utter those incomparable parables, who did? As Rousseau said: "The inventor (of the character of Jesus) would be more astonishing than the hero."

From whom did He acquire the sublime mysteries which He discloses, and who imparted to Him His unparalleled code of morals? Who was the author of those chapters in St. John's Gospel, which contain the farewell words of Jesus to His disciples, if He Himself did not utter them? If Christ did not transform, as if by magic, the narrow monotheism of the Jews into the glorious Christian Fatherhood of the One God, wide as the world and boundless as the universe, who did? Such an unrivalled personality cannot be artificially composed. According to the Modernists, Jesus was an unlearned village-mechanic. How is it then that, as a child, he confounded with his questions and answers the Scribes and Pharisees in the Temple and, in His maturer years, astonished the Jews to

such a point that they exclaimed, "never man spoke like this man"?

If the Gospel narrative is not divine, its critics ought to show us the sources from which Jesus and His group of fishermen gained their spiritual grandeur. Let them produce another book to equal those four simple records of the life of Christ. We can find noble ethical principles in the writings of Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Epictetus; but while the Sermon on the Mount has transformed the world, the precepts of the Stoics have remained sterile. They lack the inspiration of that divine personality. In fact, Jesus Christ is the *essence* of Christianity. Without Him it has no reason for existing. Take from Him His divinity, and His words become meaningless, His personality a pallid ghost. His religion is not an abstract, academic, ethical system. It is *pre-eminently personal.* It thrills with the ever-present vitality of an ever-living God. It depends absolutely on the actual, historic incarnation of the Son of God, preached by eye-witnesses of His miracles, death and resurrection, who flung themselves upon a scoffing world and by their conquest of it changed its destiny. The corner-stone of the Church that Jesus founded is Jesus Christ Himself. Remove that corner-stone, and the whole structure must inevitably fall. Reject the dogma of the Incarnation, and we may still have numerous loosely-linked sodalities for "Uplift," "New Thought," "Ethical Culture," "Christian Science," and the like, all of which more or less venerate Jesus as an "Ideal Man"; but these invertebrate communities cannot justly be called *Christian*, unless they believe in Christ *as He represented Himself* to be, namely, *the Son of God.*

Christianity, as a religion, stands or falls with Christ's divinity. No mere philosopher or speculative thinker spoke those words of His in the Gospels. It was a man *who summoned all men to believe in Him, as the Son of God, to love Him supremely*, and, taking up a cross of self-denial, to follow Him, if need be, even unto death.

As a reason for so doing, He advanced a wonderful claim, different both in its nature and its magnitude from that advanced by any prophets and founders of religions ever known. These sometimes called themselves divinely appointed messengers or teachers, but none of them ever claimed to be the actual Son of God!

But are we certain that Christ claimed this?

Let us see.

Chapter II

DID CHRIST CLAIM TO BE THE SON OF GOD?

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing, where we cannot prove."

TENNYSON.

"Comes any good from Nazareth?
Behold the mighty Nazarene,
The Lord of life, the Lord of death,
Through warring ages walks serene."

MARGARET SANGSTER.

RATIONALISTS and Modernists deny that Jesus made the claim of Divinity, but it is difficult to understand how they can reasonably do so. If one has never specially investigated and collected the Biblical evidence on this point, one will be astonished at the frequency with which Jesus made the assertion, not merely that He was the Messiah, the Son of Man, but also unequivocally that He was the Son of God.

In the first place, there can be no doubt as to what the Jews, who heard His declaration in the Temple and in the judgement-hall of Caiaphas, thought about its meaning. Caiaphas rent his clothes dramatically, as he listened to His words, and pronounced them blasphemous, because the prisoner thereby declared Himself to be the *Son of God.* This the High Priest would not have done, had Jesus spoken figuratively, or if His affirmation had not seemed to Caiaphas veritable blasphemy.

The chief priests also said to Pilate: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the *Son of God.*"*

To the Pharisees who questioned Jesus as to His origin, He replied: "'Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world' . . . Then they said to Him: 'We have one Father, even God.' Jesus said to them: 'If God were your Father, you would indeed love me, for *from God I proceeded and came.* . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you: If a man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever.' Then said the Jews to Him: 'Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?' . . . Jesus answered:

* John xix. 7.

'Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw it and was glad.' The Jews therefore said to Him: 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them: 'Before Abraham was made, *I am*.'"*

To the blind man, whose eyes had been opened, Jesus said: "'Dost thou believe in the *Son of God*?' He answered and said: 'Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?' And Jesus said to him: 'Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.'"†

When Jesus uttered to the Jews the solemn words: "I and the Father are *one*,"‡ they promptly took up stones to hurl at Him, which is a proof that they understood perfectly that He claimed to be the Son of God, for by their law blasphemy was thus punished. Moreover, the word "one" is in both Greek and Latin in the neuter gender (ἕν—unum), indicating not a union of sentiment, but of *substance*.

If Jesus had meant by this, as Rationalists would like to have us believe, that He was the Son of God only in the sense that all Jews or all men are God's children, they would not have been scandalized. But they understood that the divine Sonship which He claimed was something different. On the same occasion He said to them: "Say you of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, *I am the Son of God?* If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father."§

Elsewhere He makes this very clear: "*All things* are delivered to me by my Father; and no one knoweth the Son but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him."‖

"The Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things which He himself doth." . . . "As the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will." . . . "The Father hath given all judgement to the Son, that *all men may honour the Son, as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father*, who hath sent Him."¶

. . . . . .

But, of all the utterances of Jesus on this subject, the most convincing, solemn and awe-inspiring are those words spoken by Him to His disciples on the evening of the Last Supper, before His

* John viii. † John ix. 35–37. ‡ John x. 30.
§ John x. 36–38. ‖ Matt. xi. 27. ¶ John v. 19–23.

betrayal.* Among these are the following: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions; if not, I would have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also; and from henceforth you shall know Him; and you have seen Him. . . . He that seeth me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou: Show us the Father?† . . . The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me and have believed that *I came out from God. I came forth from the Father*, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father."‡

Note especially, in the same chapter, some words, whose accents vibrate with divine tenderness and majesty: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee . . . I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, glorify Thou me, O Father, with thyself with the glory *which I had before the world was, with Thee.*"§

Here Jesus speaks distinctly of His pre-existence, but no less plainly does He frequently allude to the future life for every soul. And this He does, not with the reservations or hesitations of a speculative philosopher, but with the certainty of one who knows the other world and *has been there*. Not, however, as a traveller who returns from foreign lands and relates his experiences, but as a man who, in a foreign country, describes his fatherland, his former home. "In my Father's house there are many mansions." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."‖

What man ever dared to speak of God in this intimate and filial way?

Where Jesus does not actually claim divine Sonship in so many words, He implies it no less clearly. Thus, in the parable which Jesus spoke of the householder who leased his vineyard to husbandmen and went away into a strange country, He describes the way in which the householder sent servants to receive the fruits of it, all of whom were beaten and stoned. "Last of all," said Jesus, "he sent to them *his son*, saying, 'They will reverence my son.' But the husbandmen cast him out of the vineyard and killed him." Here the meaning is plain, and it was also clearly understood. For "When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard the parable, *they knew that He spoke of them.*"

* John xiv–xvii. † xiv. 1–9. ‡ xvi. 27.
§ John xvii. 1–5. ‖ John i. 18.

Finally, in His solemn prediction of the end of the world and the Last Judgement,* *Jesus assumes the rôle of the future Judge of mankind, the final Arbiter of human destiny.* This can be done by God alone. But did Jesus Christ actually assert that He should come thus finally to judge the world? He did, positively, repeatedly, and with awful emphasis, saying: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Unless, therefore, we regard Him as a deluded visionary or an impostor, we must believe Him to have claimed to be, and to have been, the *Son of God.*

* * * * * *

If we ask ourselves whether others, *especially the writers of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament,* ascribed to Jesus this honour, it is difficult to see how any reader of those sacred books can doubt it. First, we have the indirect testimony of John the Baptist, when Jesus came to him for baptism. Before Jesus had appeared on the banks of the Jordan, John had already said of Him: "I indeed baptize you in water unto penance; but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost . . ." Moreover, as John beheld Jesus approaching, he said to the multitude: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" And when Jesus actually presented Himself to John, the latter exclaimed: "I ought to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" And Jesus said unto him: "Suffer it to be so now."

After Jesus had been baptized, "the heavens were opened to Him and he (John) saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him; and behold, a voice from heaven saying: This is my *beloved Son,* in whom I am well pleased."† "And John gave testimony, saying: I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven: and he remained upon Him . . . and I saw and I gave testimony that this is the *Son of God.*"‡

A similar testimony from heaven accompanied the scene of the Transfiguration of Jesus, Moses, and Elias, when a voice came out of the cloud, saying: "*This is my beloved Son;* hear him."§

In the account of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, the devil said to Him: "*If Thou be the Son of God,* command that these stones be made bread"; and again: "If Thou be the *Son of God,* cast Thyself down"; and Jesus replied: "It is written: Thou shalt not tempt *the Lord, thy God.*"‖

The demoniacs of the country of the Gerasenes also cried out: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, *Son of God?*"¶

* * * * * *

* Matt. xxv. † Matt. iii. 14–15. ‡ John i. 32–34.
§ Luke ix. 35. ‖ Matt. iv. 3–7. ¶ Matt. viii. 29.

But, it may be urged: "These were *supernatural* testimonies, and these we wave aside. What did the *human* contemporaries of Jesus say of His claim to divinity?" First of all, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Apostles themselves finally believed that Jesus was incarnate God. Even Renan admits this. It is true, their ideas of the Messiah who was to come, like those of practically all the Jews, were at first very different from the personality which Christ presented. It required time and much familiar intercourse with their Master fully to open their dull eyes. How often had Jesus to reprove them for their lack of comprehension and faith! "Have I been so long a time with you, and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth me, seeth the Father also."*

But at last the divine light broke upon their minds. Thus, on the night when Jesus appeared to them walking upon the Sea of Genesareth, and had rescued the impulsive Peter, who had tried to go to Him, "they that were in the boat came and adored Him, saying: 'Indeed, Thou art the *Son of God*.'"† At Cesarea Philippi, when Jesus had asked His disciples: "But whom do *you* say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ, *the Son of the Living God*." To this Jesus replied: "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."‡ Nor can we forget the testimony of John, who, at the conclusion of his Gospel, wrote: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, *that* you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, *the Son of God*."§

On the way to the tomb of Lazarus, whom He was to raise from the dead, Jesus said to the sister Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him: Yea, Lord; I have believed that Thou art Christ, the *Son of the living God*, who art come into this world."‖

Note that in all these and similar instances, Jesus does not correct the speakers, but accepts their statements as true.

* * * * * *

But not only did the friends of Jesus recognize His claim to divine Sonship; His enemies among the Jews at once perceived it. We have already seen this in the case of the High Priests and Pharisees

* John xiv. 9. † Matt. xiv. 33. ‡ Matt. xvi. 16–18.
§ John xx. 30–31. ‖ John xi. 25–27.

at the judgement hall of Caiaphas and before Pilate; but other such instances continually occurred. Thus, after Jesus had healed the paralytic man on the Sabbath day, the Jews sought to kill Him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but because He had "also said that God was His Father, *making himself equal to God.*"*

On another occasion, Jesus asked the Jews: "Many good works I have shewed you from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me? The Jews answered Him: For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."†

Also, in healing the man sick of the palsy, Jesus said to him: "Thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold, some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only? But Jesus said: Whether is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say: Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He said to the man who was sick of the palsy): Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house!"‡

And the man arose, and departed completely cured. Here, as the Jews themselves perfectly well understood, Jesus acted as God.

Not to be forgotten also are the words cast derisively in the face of Jesus by the Jews, as He hung in agony on the Cross: "If Thou be the *Son of God*, come down from the Cross!"§

* * * * * *

These citations, taken cumulatively, afford indisputable evidence that Jesus spoke of Himself as being the *Son of God* in an absolutely unique and essential sense, and also that many others attributed to Him that honour. Does it seem credible, therefore, that certain modern critics, including several clergymen and prelates of the Anglican, Episcopalian, and other Christian Churches, deny that Jesus ever claimed divine Sonship, and even disbelieve in His divinity?

The Rev. Father Woodlock, S.J., the foremost Catholic authority on Modernism in England to-day, tells us that at the Cambridge Girton Conference of English Modernists in 1921, a professor of divinity remarked: "We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine that His (Christ's) personality was not human, but divine . . . *I do not for a moment suppose that Jesus ever thought of Himself as God.*"

In an article by the same author, printed in *The Catholic Mind*, March 22, 1929, Father Woodlock quotes Dean Rashdall as saying at the same conference: "*Jesus did not claim divinity for Himself.*" He also tells us that Prof. Kirsopp Lake of Harvard University,

* John v. 18. † John x. 33.
‡ Matt. ix. 2–7. § Matt. xxvii. 40.

once an Anglican parson, but now the leading Modernist in America, agrees with the above statements, and himself declares: "Jesus never claimed to be divine at all . . . *The central doctrine of Catholic theology was unknown to Jesus* and to those disciples who first recorded His life"; and, in speaking of the "Church of the Future," the professor affirms that that Church will not require as a condition of membership *that we should accept any opinion about Jesus*, "*not even His own!*"

In the same article Father Woodlock also quotes the prominent English Modernist, the Rev. Dr. Major, as saying, in the Oxford Conference of 1925, that Christ would have been astonished had He been told that His disciples would set to work to baptize and gather their followers into a Church; and cites Bishop Barnes of Birmingham as saying at the same meeting, that Christ, at the Last Supper, would have been surprised had He been told that this "farewell meal" with His friends would become a Sacrament and a Sacrifice in a Church which He never had any idea of founding!

* * * * * *

In all this, one thing stands out with especial prominence. The critics of the last century did not play a double part. They were frankly and unequivocally hostile. But some of our contemporary clerical Modernists, although they disbelieve the doctrines of the virgin birth, the resurrection and even the divinity of Christ, nevertheless stand up before their congregations every Sunday and solemnly repeat: "*I believe* in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in *Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary*, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried . . . The third day *he rose again from the dead*," etc. etc.

How can they honestly and with self-respect enact this comedy?

Evidently by making to themselves a mental reservation to the effect that they employ these words *in a peculiar sense* and as "part of an outlived formula." But "*I believe*" is not a phrase to juggle with either before God or man. Christ attached the greatest importance to faith in Himself, and declared: "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life." As for the disingenuousness of these clerical Modernists before men, can anything justify them in retaining their positions—and salaries—in a Church, *whose Creed and Prayer Book teach the very opposite of what these prelates elsewhere affirm?* Between the manly frankness of the older critics and the subterfuges of these pulpit agitators there is a distinction so plain that it is not necessary to define it here.

No doubt they justify their conduct by saying that the Church of England includes and tolerates every shade of theological opinion

from rationalism to Roman Catholicism. But he who embraces too much, says the proverb, retains nothing. It is now impossible precisely to define the creed of Anglicanism, so elastic has it become. The Thirty-nine Articles and the Prayer Book are entirely misleading as a standard, since they no longer correspond to the belief of thousands. Under such conditions, it would be natural to suppose that the creed of the Prayer Book would be changed. But the diversity of opinions in regard to it and the fact that the Church of England is a national institution whose ultimate authority rests in the House of Commons, make such a change impossible. To leave the matter as it is, however, and to allow some members of the Anglican clergy to interpret as they like the Credo, published in the Book of Common Prayer, and to keep on declaring they believe what they do not believe, is a grievous scandal.

If Christ is not the Son of God, then it is blasphemy publicly to worship Him, as if He were.

How long will this dechristianizing of the Church continue without provoking a revolt? To keep up a semblance of belief, after real belief is gone, dooms those who are guilty of it to spiritual remorse, and their unfortunate victims will one day find themselves in well-nigh empty churches—impoverished orphans in (for them) a Christless world.

It is true, Anglicans and their Episcopal kinsmen in America, who seem to be most infected with Modernism, form the smallest of the better-known non-Catholic sects; yet they are, as a rule, wealthy and socially influential, and such a spirit of scepticism would, if adopted by them, be contagious and dangerous.

The Anglicans constitute numerically a very small proportion of the inhabitants of Great Britain, and an insignificant fraction of the world's Protestant Christians. In the United States also the proportion of the Episcopal Church to the population is about the same. According to the statement of the Bishop of Durham, in 1927, out of a population of more than 36,000,000, no more than 3,686,422 persons in England and Wales above the age of eighteen registered themselves as members of the National Church, and only about 2,500,000 of these were communicants! Among these there are beyond all question a multitude of holy and devout souls, but as a corporate body Anglicans do not form a dominating part of Christian Christendom. They possess indeed a glorious liturgy, and Catholics admire it all the more because so much of it has been borrowed almost literally from the Catholic Missal. Their hymnology also is probably the most beautiful and inspiring collection of sacred poetry in the English language. But alas, the Church of England is now a house divided against itself. Created by an Act of Parliament, it is controlled by a Parliamentary majority. Should it, through

disestablishment, lose its State income and prestige, many of its members would probably disintegrate into Nonconformist denominations or lapse into paganism. "We are already becoming Pagans," said an Englishman sadly to-day to the author of these lines. Many, however, would doubtless prefer "Popery" to paganism, and would return to the Roman Catholic Church of their ancestors. Even as it is, about twelve thousand people in Great Britain go over to that Church every year.

* * * * * *

On the 15th of September, 1929, there was celebrated throughout Great Britain and Ireland the centenary of Catholic emancipation from the cruel laws which had fettered Catholics in those countries for centuries. At the solemnization of the Pontifical High Mass in the spacious grounds of Westminster Cathedral in London on this occasion, the number of people present is variously estimated at from twelve to twenty thousand. Many more filled the adjacent streets and the windows of the houses.

What has been accomplished in England during the last hundred years can be partly seen from the jubilant sermon preached by the Archbishop of Liverpool, who said, among other things, the following: "We claim for the story of Catholic emancipation in England a peculiar glory. Here those who were emancipated were indeed a little flock. But, unhampered by cramping restrictions, the body Catholic waxed strong. Ours is indeed a wonderful record of progress. The rough road which we have traversed is marked by such monumental milestones as the re-establishment of the Hierarchy, the building of Westminster Cathedral, the multiplication of provinces, the erection of new sees, the founding of new parishes, the continual opening of new schools, a steadily increasing stream of converts, and churches packed with worshippers in an age which complains of empty pews. We are to be found in the forefront in every walk of life. In a century we have leavened the whole of society. It is no exaggeration to say that half the Boy Scouts of the world are Catholic. Time has shown that we are not the less loyal to the land of our birth because we acknowledge a spiritual loyalty to the Sovereign Vicar of Christ on earth."

Of course there are found in the ranks of the Modernists different degrees of violence in their criticisms of Christianity. In comparison with the extreme Rationalists or atheists of to-day, they are distinctly moderate. Some are content to dismiss the miracles of Jesus with a condescending smile, His "virgin birth" with a shrug, and some of the sacraments with a sneer. But among the thoroughly godless groups of the neo-pagans there are some who assume towards the personality of Jesus an almost incredibly brutal attitude.

The authors of the old "mythical," "natural," and "romantic" theories of Strauss, Paulus, Baur, and Renan, concerning the origins of Christianity and its Founder, were, as a rule, respectful and eulogistic of Jesus.

Renan, for example, says of Him: "Even to-day Rationalism can gaze fixedly upon Him only on its knees before Him." And again: "Each of us owes to Jesus what there is best in him."

Strauss said: "It will never be possible in any age to rise higher than He, or to imagine anyone who is equal to Him."

John Stuart Mill offers Him this tribute: "However much of our faith criticism may take from us, Christ remains to us that unique Figure which towers equally above His predecessors and successors."

Goethe wrote: "The religion of Jesus Christ depends upon the personality of Jesus Christ Himself."

But, in contrast to such sincere—even though misguided—admirers of Jesus in the past, it is unfortunately true that among the radical opponents of Christianity at the present time there are found certain specimens sufficiently degraded to question and to vilify the purity and sinlessness of Jesus. Until recently His impeccability had never been contested, even by His severest critics. The Saviour's splendid challenge to the Pharisees: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" had never been seriously answered. His contemporaries, friends and foes alike, had found no moral imperfection in His character. Like Pilate, they were compelled to say: "I find no fault in Him." And truly in the perfection of His moral teaching and His conduct there exists no flaw. Not the act, but the mere looking on a woman to lust after her, in His code constitutes adultery. Not the outside, but the inside of the cup and platter forms the test of moral spotlessness.

If Jesus had been guilty of the slightest sinful act, His disciples, who were with Him continually, would never have believed in His divinity. It does not appear from the words of the apostles, either in the Gospels or the Epistles, that they ever observed in Him the smallest fault. Not a suspicion of an immorality of any kind was ever breathed against Him. Even the wretched man who betrayed Him, cried in an agony of remorse: "I have betrayed innocent blood."

Still more significant of the holiness of Jesus is the absolute reticence which He maintains regarding any personal sinfulness of His own. Usually, the more saintly a man is, the more conscious does he become of his own defects of character. Had Jesus been, as our Modernists would like to make Him, merely the "best of men," He should have been the first to confess His weaknesses and to lament, as the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, and every saint

who ever lived has always done, the enormous moral and spiritual difference between himself and God. But in Jesus there is never the slightest trace of penitence or remorse for sin. We see the apostle Peter, after his denial of his Master, go out and weep bitterly. We see the publican beat upon his breast and murmur: "God be merciful to me a sinner." We find St. Paul repeatedly bewailing his evil nature, as in his cry: "The good which I will, I do not, but the evil which I will not, that I do . . . Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

But Jesus never makes such a confession. He speaks of sin, but not as if He himself were ever guilty of it. He says: "If *you*, being evil, know how to give good gifts,"† but He never says: "If *we*, being evil."

Yet this fact does not offend us. In any other personage of history that attitude would be repellent; but not in Him. The words in the Epistle to the Hebrews recur to us: "For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one, tempted in all things like as we are, yet *without sin*." His moral code was the strictest of the strict, yet never, even in Gethsemane and on the Cross, does He ask from His Father forgiveness for Himself, but only for his persecutors. This is a quality which shows the nature, either of a hardened charlatan, or of a sinless God.

* * * * * *

In violent antithesis, however, to this conception of a sinless Saviour, the criticisms of many of our modern radicals are often offensive.

Their authors seem to think that, since the attacks of their predecessors have proved powerless to destroy Christianity, they are compelled to resort to vituperation. Yet, notwithstanding all their efforts, they see that the Catholic Church and the vast majority of believing Christians of all denominations still hold it as absolutely true and proven, that Jesus called Himself the *Son of God;* not in the sense in which all Christians may be thought of as God's children, but as the only begotten Son of the Father, consubstantial with Him, and in His divine nature equal to Him. In other words, that *Jesus was conscious of His divine nature and mission.*

The supreme importance of this avowal lies in the fact that if He was *not* conscious of this divine Sonship, yet uttered the words attributed to Him in the Gospels, He must have been either the most blasphemous impostor ever known, or else a self-duped paranoiac. The first of these suppositions is now held by practically no one. The wonderful language, incomparable teaching, sublime spirituality,

* Rom. vii. 19, 24. † Matt. vii. 11.

and stainless moral character of Jesus—now almost universally acknowledged—preclude the possibility of His having been a sacrilegious charlatan. There remains the other alternative that He was mentally unsound, and this hypothesis has actually been adopted by some modern critics, who are implacably unwilling to concede that He was God. They call Him, therefore, variously either an ecstatic, a visionary, a victim of megalomania, an epileptic, the son of pathologically afflicted parents, or even a "born degenerate"! As for His resurrection, they apparently take pleasure in asserting that "The body of Jesus was probably thrown into the common pit reserved for malefactors, as Abbé Loisy suggests; while the story of the burial by Joseph of Arimathea *grew up*, to save Him from the terrible dishonour of such a last resting-place."*

* * * * * *

And yet, if Jesus were not God incarnate, *while claiming to be so*, that monstrous caricature of our Lord may be, to some extent at least, nearer to the truth than the portrait which many Modernists ask us to accept; namely, that of a man who, although wise, gifted, sane, and sinless, was nevertheless *merely a man*, born naturally of simple peasants and in no way superior to the human standard. For we must not forget that this wise, gifted, sane, and saintly man *claimed to be something more than this*, and called upon all men to believe in Him that they might have eternal life, that is, to believe in Him as the Son of God. If it was a *mere man* who made these demands and uttered such sublime expressions as "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"; or "I am the Light of the world"; "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me," it is not strange that he was thought insane. Felder is, therefore, right in repudiating the sentimental theory that Jesus was *merely* the most perfect of men; and he justly says: "Jesus is either a divine man, or only half a man, but never under any circumstances a modern 'Ideal Man.'"

* * * * * *

Much of this modern systematic belittling of Jesus is more despicable than any previous form of depreciation, because it degrades even His mental, physical, and moral normality. The attempt to rob Him of everything divine and supernatural, which has for twenty centuries hallowed Him, and to ascribe to Him a morbid mind and a diseased body, reminds us of the Scribes and Pharisees who passed the suffering Saviour on the Cross, wagging

* Roy Wood Sellars, *Next Step in Religion*, p. 82.

their heads and scoffing at His sacrifice. For His contemporary critics on the slopes of Calvary their dying Victim pleaded : " Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." *But His modern detractors are perfectly aware of what they do.* Those who now rend His seamless robe, have not the excuse of ignorance. The life of Christ and the marvellous record of Christianity for two millenniums are there to shame them into silence.

Yet, as an illustration of how low humanity can sink in this respect, let me mention the following incident. A few years ago, a little before Easter time, there appeared in a popular American magazine a story written by a well-known contributor to current literature. This story had for its principal, thinly-veiled character, Jesus of Nazareth, and it portrayed the crucified Son of God as an impostor and worse than an impostor. He is represented as having been taken down from the cross before He was really dead, and laid in the sepulchre in a comatose state. On awakening from unconsciousness, He rises, and despite His weakness rolls away the stone and takes refuge in a neighbouring peasant's dwelling. The peasant's wife dresses His wounds, and, after some days, " as she crouched to serve Him, he saw her breasts sway away from her humble body under her smock. He knew she wished He would desire her, and she was youngish and not uncomely," etc. There are also scenes between Jesus and Mary Magdalen that must offend even the most lukewarm Christian. An ardent young game-cock plays a prominent part in the story, and even furnishes one of the titles of the narrative, the other being " Resurrection ! "

The resuscitated man is portrayed as utterly disillusioned and disgusted with his former life and labours. " I must go to my Father," he finally says to Mary Magdalen . . . " Now I belong to my Father, though *I know not what he is, nor where he is.* And still he is." Accordingly, he decides to slip away from all his old acquaintances and to become a physician. He " cut his hair and beard after the right fashion and smiled to himself, and bought himself shoes and the right mantle." He also presented the peasant with a piece of money (which Mary Magdalen had given him), but asks him for the gift of the game-cock ! Then he leaves the house, carrying the fowl under his arm. The author of the story then parodies the meeting of Jesus with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus ; and when at last they recognize him and cry " Master," he " laughs softly," and, turning down a side lane, is seen no more. He calls for " fritters," however, at the first inn he comes to, and gives to the inn-keeper the game-cock, to which he says at parting : " Thou at least hast found thy kingdom and the females to thy body ! "

Any comment on this revolting specimen of blasphemy and obscenity is needless. Only a depraved mind could imagine such an

ending to the life of One, who is adored as the Son of God by millions of the human race, and at least reverenced by millions more; and the incomprehensible taste of an editor in publishing this caricature of the risen Christ, a little before Easter, with the title "Resurrection," shows what a disgraceful literary level it is possible to reach in this age of Modernism.

I sometimes picture to myself the modern enemies of the supernatural Christ, as standing before His Cross at the time of the crucifixion, when the Roman centurion, terrified by the darkness and the earthquake, exclaimed: "Surely this was the Son of God!"

"Not at all," some of these critics would have said, "he was only a man like the rest of us." "But," someone might have objected, "I heard him last night solemnly declare before the High Priest that he was the Son of God." A chorus of voices would have answered him: "That very thing proves him to have been mad, at best a dreamer, probably an impostor."

"We know his peasant parents," another would have cried; "those stories about the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary the coming of her divine child and the whole fable of the virgin birth of this poor man were idle tales. His clever cures were of course not miracles. He was a charlatan."

This imagined language is not exaggerated. Worse words than these have been uttered and written by the modern enemies of Christ. Not all of them express themselves in such irreverent and vulgar terms; but whether their words are violent or veiled, *their meaning is the same, their wish identical. It is to substitute Jesus the carpenter for Jesus the Christ.*

* * * * * *

Yet all these efforts to crush the supernatural Saviour and His Church prove unsuccessful. The waves that beat against the Rock of Peter break into foam and roll back to the void, leaving the glorious cliff immovable.

The founders of other religions are dead, but Jesus Christ still lives in the hearts and lives of countless followers, as their divine Companion, Master, and Friend. Three hundred million Catholics believe in His supernatural living presence in the Eucharist. Two hundred millions of non-Catholics also worship Him as the Son of God.

The literature concerning Him is inexhaustible and constantly increasing. Art has portrayed Him for two thousand years, yet still the illustrations of His life and person are perennial. Even the cinema and stage are rendering His earthly sojourn lifelike, poignant, and sublime. Incalculable treasures, accumulated through the ages, cathedrals, cloisters, ancient manuscripts, sacred music, painting,

poetry, hymnology, liturgies, altars, vestments, and literally miles of printed volumes concerning Him now form the heritage of the Church of Christ, and gather round its sacred form, as the Judaean mountains cluster round Jerusalem.

The godless world to-day, perhaps unconsciously, is permeated with the influences of Christianity. Every Occidental document, from a State paper to the humblest postal card, is stamped with figures of the year of our Lord. The Modernists themselves have to submit to the Christian calendar. Their years are numbered from the Babe of Bethlehem. Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter are immortal tributes to His memory.

Uplifted on the Cross, in every land His outstretched arms invite the weary and the heavy-laden to come to Him for rest. He prophesied that, if He were thus lifted up, He would draw all men unto Him; and after two millenniums He is still drawing them, some to adore and others to revile. His Cross points heavenward, as the symbol of Christianity, from every Catholic church; is found in every Catholic home; and hallows every consecrated grave in what the Germans beautifully call either "God's Acre" or "The Court of Peace."

The prayers addressed to Him, as Deity, form an unbroken spiritual girdle round the globe. Each day, as our revolving orb lifts vista after vista of its surface to the rising sun, the dawn continually greets the sacred chalice elevated from some cross-crowned altar, while to the lips of countless kneeling worshippers comes the inspired acclamation of Saint Thomas to the risen Saviour: "My Lord and my God!"

Chapter III

WAS JESUS MIRACULOUS OR NON-MIRACULOUS?

"Your soul can occupy itself at the same time with what is going on here, in Egypt, and in Sicily. Is not then the intelligence of God capable of thinking of everything in a single instant?"

SOCRATES. (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, I, Chap. IV.)

"We may be sure that what is so spontaneous and ineradicable in human nature (as prayer) has its fitting objects and methods in the arrangements of a boundless Providence." CHAPIN.

"... What are men better than sheep or goats ...
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

TENNYSON.

Modernism calls petitionary prayer a "form of magic."

THE second question that I asked myself was: "*Did Jesus exhibit miraculous proofs to substantiate His claim?*

Rationalists, including many of their latest representatives, the Modernists, deny that He did so. They recognize in the supernatural their deadliest foe. On that point they are all agreed. For them Jesus, whatever else He may have been, was non-miraculous. The *sine qua non* of all their arguments concerning Him is the total abolition of everything superhuman in His origin, life, and death. According to them, He had no pre-existence with the Father before the world was made, was not born of a Virgin, performed no miracles, did not rise from the dead and was not divine. Before they examine, in their researches, the first text of Scripture, their slogan is that all such "signs and wonders" as are recorded in the Gospels never did take place, never could take place, and never can take place. Renan states distinctly that the denial of the miraculous "*precedes all exegesis*." Starting out with this *à priori* ultimatum, the exclusively human nature of Jesus is naturally a foregone conclusion.

But such an arbitrary premise begs the question. The mere assertion that the miracles attributed to Jesus never occurred, does not prove the assertion true. Something more than that is necessary. The Gospel narratives bear the stamp of history. They are indeed a part of carefully recorded history. Numberless Christians and non-Christians—beginning with eye-witnesses and ending with distinguished scholars—have believed and still believe that the works

ascribed to Jesus were actual occurrences; and this great cloud of witnesses cannot be discarded as a negligible quantity. After all, what is a miracle?

* * * * * *

A miracle is a supernatural event, occurring outside the usual course of nature, as we know it. It is not something which can subsequently be explained by the discovery of natural methods hitherto unknown, as, for example, wireless telegraphy or the power to see through solid substances by means of the Röntgen rays. By a miracle we mean a direct change effected by God in the ordinary procedure of nature. In doing this the Almighty may be reverently compared to an organist, who turns from one bank of keys to play upon another. Cardinal Newman rightly says that, while miracles are exceptions to the laws of one system, they may coincide with those of another system, and are usually employed to effect some *moral* purpose, if God prefers to make the ethical order of the cosmos temporarily supersede the physical. What was the *purpose* behind the working of Christ's supernatural acts? That point is never taken into consideration by unbelievers; yet on that purpose the whole justification of divine intervention may depend.

To claim that the Creator and Director of this boundless universe is limited to a single method of activity, because it is the one He *usually* employs, and that the Lord of nature is entangled in a web of His own weaving, is to deprive Him of free will and omnipotence. Those who deny the possibility of such diversity of action imprison God in His own machinery. They mistake a *modus operandi* for a *lex immutabilis.*

After all, who made these "laws"? Did the supreme Legislator bind Himself always to observe only the methods which we know, and no others? The very idea of God presupposes that He is omniscient and omnipotent and wholly independent in His action. How dare such human pygmies as ourselves presume to limit Him?

In his *Rebuilding a Lost Faith* the author devoted an entire chapter to the subject of "Miracles, Ancient and Modern," and, so far as his present convictions are concerned, he holds to-day the same opinions that are there expressed. Hence it is unnecessary fully to repeat here what was there set forth. Nevertheless, in order to preserve the continuity of the present line of thought, especially in the case of those to whom that volume is for the moment inaccessible, I wish to state in a more condensed form some things which are there said, and to add to them a few other considerations, which seem to me of importance.

The subject of miracles in general is too vast a theme to deal

with here. I propose to consider, therefore, only those which are related of Jesus, for it is around these that the controversy of His critics chiefly rages. In the first place, do we realize how numerous the superhuman deeds of Jesus were? Those which are recorded in the Gospels are evidently only a fraction of those which He performed. Hundreds of others are descriptively massed together in phrases like the following: "And Jesus went *about all Galilee*, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and *healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity*. And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they presented to Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments . . . and He cured them."* "And Jesus went about *all the cities and towns* . . . healing every disease and every infirmity."† "And they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment; and *as many as touched were made whole*."‡ These and similar statements prove that the deeds of Jesus described in the Gospels are but samples selected from thousands.

The great Orientalist and Biblical critic, Ewald (1803–1875), says: "*Miracles were the daily occupation of Jesus* . . . Without the supernatural cures wrought *every day* by Jesus there would be very little Gospel narrative left." They formed indeed the background of His daily life. It is impossible to separate His life and works without doing violence to both. We comprehend, therefore, why the chief priests and Pharisees finally in desperation took counsel together and said: "What do we? For this man doth *many miracles*. If we let him alone all will believe in him."§

Miracles form indeed the warp and woof of the Gospel narrative from Christ's birth to His resurrection. If they are not true, then Christianity is not true. Stripped of its supernatural elements, its history is a deception and—what is worse—its Founder was Himself a deceiver. It is impossible to escape from the conclusion that either Jesus actually wrought the miracles ascribed to Him, or else that He intentionally deceived His disciples and the multitude in regard to them; for *He repeatedly appealed to those miracles as proofs of His divinity*.

* * * * * *

Consider next the *character* of Christ's supernatural interventions. They were almost invariably works of compassion and healing, and were performed, not in the dark or in dimly lighted rooms, but in broad daylight, in crowded synagogues, public squares, and in the presence of multitudes of spectators. As St. Paul declared, in his

* Matt. iv. 23–24. † Matt. ix. 35.
‡ Matt. xiv. 35–36. § John xi. 47–48.

speech before King Agrippa: "For neither was any of these things done in a corner."*

Yet there was nothing spectacular in these prodigies, nothing that could suggest the braggart or the trickster. Even in His control of the elements Jesus was quiet and composed. He stilled the winds and waves with a word; He walked to His disciples on the water at night, alone and in silence; to the two mournful travellers on the road to Emmaus He became known only "in the breaking of bread"; and when, after His resurrection, He appeared to His disconsolate followers in the room, the door of which was shut, He greeted them quietly with the words: "Peace be unto you! It is I, be not afraid." In a word, His exhibitions of divine power were never made to gratify idle curiosity. When the Pharisees, "tempting Him," demanded that He should give them some meteoric or atmospheric "sign" in the heavens, as if He were a conjurer or juggler, He refused; and before the sceptical court of Herod, clamorous for some sensational exhibition, Jesus maintained a dignified silence.

* * * * * *

Above all, let us not forget that the actual occurrence of these divinely wrought phenomena *was never doubted by Christ's contemporaries*. How gladly would the hostile Jews have claimed that they had never taken place! That was, however, impossible. The works of Jesus were so patent and so universally known in Palestine that their genuineness was conceded. On that very account the High Priest Caiaphas was determined to put the man of Nazareth to death; but He did not denounce him as a charlatan. Admitting the facts, he called him a blasphemer, because He appealed to His prodigies *as proof that He was the Son of God*. To the Jews who came and said to Him: "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly," He replied: "The *works* that I do in the name of my Father, *they give testimony of me*."†

When John the Baptist sent messengers to Him, asking: "Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus replied, as a proof of His prophesied Messiahship: "Go and tell John *what ye have heard and seen*. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."‡ And note the fact that this reply of Jesus is practically a reproduction of the prophetic words of Isaiah xxxv. 5 and 6, and lxi. 1, which attributed precisely these works to the Messiah when He should come. He thus claims unequivocally their fulfilment in Himself.

Again, when Jesus heard of the death of Lazarus and was about to go to Bethany, "to awaken him from sleep," He said to His

* Acts xxvi. 26. † John x. 24–25. ‡ Matt. xi. 4–5.

disciples plainly: "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, *that you may believe*."* And at the grave of Lazarus He uttered this prayer: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard me. And I know that Thou hearest me always; but because of the people who stand about have I said it, *that they may believe that Thou hast sent me*."†

* * * * * *

It is sometimes urged by the enemies of Christ that such supernatural deeds as His were common at that time, when necromancers and magicians abounded in the East. No doubt, magicians were then numerous in Palestine; they were to be found everywhere, and are still numerous in the Orient to-day. Such people always have existed in the world and always will exist. But what kind of prodigies do they perform and for what purpose? They are professional conjurers or mesmerists, who thereby gain a livelihood. Above all, what sort of people are they? It is impossible for a rational man to place the average hypnotist or sleight-of-hand performer in the same category with the Author of the Sermon on the Mount and of the discourses, parables, and precepts which have inspired and transformed the world. Both the character of Jesus and the nature of His supernatural works were unique, *particularly in the claim to divinity which accompanied them.*

If such deeds as those of Jesus had been common then among the people of Judæa, we should expect to find them mentioned also in the life of Christ's great contemporary, John the Baptist. The preaching of that eminent reformer produced an immense impression on the Jews all over Palestine and even throughout Asia Minor. Yet none of John's disciples ascribed to him a single miracle. Nor did the historian Josephus, who devotes some space to him, state anything of the kind about him.

In St. John's Gospel‡ the people are reported to have said: "*John indeed did no miracle*, but all things whatsoever that John said of this man (Jesus) were true." In fact, the career of the Baptist was that of the humble forerunner of the Messiah, and conformed exactly to his own announcement: "After me there cometh a man who is preferred before me, for He was before me; the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to unloose . . . Behold the Lamb of God . . . And I saw and gave testimony that this is the Son of God."

* * * * * *

Why did not all who beheld Christ's supernatural works believe in His divinity? There is but one adequate answer to this question.

* John xi. 14–15. † John xi. 41–42. ‡ x. 41.

It is: *Because they did not want to.* They could not controvert the facts, but the *claims that accompanied them, they would not accept.* It is well known that those who have a sufficiently strong will-power can make their minds impervious to convincing evidence, and are able to close their eyes to the light and remain in darkness, if they are determined to do so.

But mortal blindness, whether it be congenital or voluntary, does not dim the splendour of the sun. The high priests, scribes, and Pharisees, having denied Christ's claims, logically rejected all the proofs He offered of their truth. He was not the kind of Messiah they had looked for. They wished to be delivered, not from the yoke of sin, but from the yoke of Cæsar. They had expected, not a Sermon on the Mount, but a summons to arms. They could not gainsay His marvellous deeds of healing and the raising of Lazarus from the dead, but they could and did ascribe such acts to the devil. "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils."*

Yet it is also undeniable that thousands of unprejudiced persons did believe in Christ and acknowledged Him to be divine *in consequence of the miracles He wrought.* Among the first to believe in Him were naturally the daily witnesses of these prodigies—the apostles. St. John expressly says: "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life . . . that we declare unto you."†

And again, at the end of his Gospel, he writes: "This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things; and we know that his testimony is true."‡

Fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ, Peter also, on the day of Pentecost, thus boldly addressed the Jews: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by *miracles, wonders and signs,* which God did by Him *in the midst of you, as you also know* . . . this Jesus hath God raised again from the dead, *whereof all we are witnesses.*"§

The apostolic Father Quadratus, bishop of the Church at Athens, who wrote a defence of Christianity, which he presented to the emperor Hadrian, A.D. 126, affirmed that the miracles of the Saviour were not only startlingly impressive, but unforgettable, and that many of those who had been healed by Him were still living, when he (Quadratus) wrote.

If Jesus really wrought no miracles, how came it to pass that the apostles believed in them (including His resurrection) so unquestioningly, that they at once went forth throughout the then known world,

* Mark iii. 22. † I John i. 1–3.
‡ John xxi. 24. § Acts ii. 22, 32.

proclaiming them in spite of every sort of persecution, and finally died in testimony of their truth? To exclude the supernatural facts about Jesus and His apostles from their lives, is not only to convict Christ of imposture, but His apostles also of credulous fanaticism, which would make of them a band of simpletons or madmen. The Gospels too would then become a book of fairy tales. Moreover, since the narratives of the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus form an indispensable part of the Christian creed, a denial of them makes the Christian liturgy a farce.

But the humble fishermen who converted a large part of the Roman empire to Christianity, did not die for a legend, nor were they martyrs for a myth. Their simple characters, their noble lives and their heroic deaths attest the fact that they were neither imbeciles nor impostors. Unlettered fishermen and humble artizans they were, and this makes evident the fact that to have spoken, written and acted as they subsequently did, required the promised aid and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

* * * * * *

Now the supremely important thing to bear in mind is this: If Jesus, when claiming to be the Son of God, *appealed to His works, as evidence of His divine Sonship*, then no true Christian can refuse to believe in them. They cannot be to him either meaningless or mythical. To pick and choose in the Modernist fashion among the statements which the Gospels make concerning Him—retaining some, rejecting others, to suit themselves—is intolerable arrogance. The message of Christ to humanity is not to be treated like goods displayed upon a bargain-counter, to be turned over and selected from. Yet, once accept the claim of Jesus to be Divinity incarnate, and everything in the Gospel narrative becomes harmonious. His birth, His character, His revelation, His authoritative teaching, His personal demands for love and loyalty, His miracles, His resurrection and the enthusiasm and devotion of a host of martyrs through the centuries are not surprising.

And, after all, why not accept the story as it stands? If Jesus was the Son of God, what could be more natural than for Him to use His power to attest His claim? An envoy sent from God to men *must furnish evidence of the fact*, and prove in some way that He really comes from God and for a divinely appointed purpose. How could the masses, and especially the fanatically prejudiced Jews, have ever been persuaded that Jesus was the Messiah, if He had not arrested their attention and dispelled their doubts by the miraculous works recorded in the Gospels? His personality was no doubt most attractive and His words impressive, but these alone were not enough. Comparatively few would have received Him as the Son

of God had not His conduct justified His claim. Would those who disbelieved Him have acted differently, if He had flashed forth His credentials in letters of fire on the sky, or given some terrific, overpowering, and irresistible proofs of supernatural power? Perhaps; but then what merit would there have been in a faith *imposed by violence on unwilling souls?*

Men cannot be *unanimously* convinced of anything unless by force, and God does not *compel* men to believe. He respects the freedom of will with which He endowed them. He makes the truth of revelation clear, but not irresistible.

Every path of scientific research brings us ultimately face to face with the Infinite. We find there every feature of the physical universe revealing order and design, the universal reign of law and a marvellous adaptation of means to ends. It is irrational to think that such a universe is the result of chance or of blind necessity, and equally irrational to claim that all this infinite variety is the evolution of a single germ. But, even if it were, *whence came the germ?*

Our earth was once believed to be the centre of the universe; now we know it is an infinitesimal point in boundless space. But it is large enough to have been the stage, on which the Son of God deigned to enact the tragedy of Calvary. With God there is neither great nor small. His appreciation is one of quality, not of quantity.

I believe in a creative and controlling Power. That is Theism. I believe in the Incarnation of that Power in our human nature, to redeem it. That is Christianity.

* * * * * *

There is another phase of this question which calls for our consideration. The Rationalists' and Modernists' denial of miracles and of any supernatural intervention in the lives of men or nations is equivalent to rejecting *petitionary prayer*. To them such prayer is a superstitious attempt to change God's will and to alter the already established order of things. They have no objection to prayer in the sense of spiritual communion with God, because this does not controvert their conception of the universe; still, even so, they consider it a sort of subjective exaltation, a fine form of hysteria. *Petitionary* prayer, however, they brand as an absurdity, an interference with the interlocking wheels of causes and effects.

But to an omniscient God the past, the present, and the future are one eternal *Now*. One thinks of them as parts of a musical score read simultaneously by a great composer. Exceptional variations from God's usual methods, voluntarily made by Him in answer to prayer, have been foreseen by Him from all eternity, and the perfect vision of Omnipotence precludes the possibility of "unexpectedness" or change of purpose on His part. God knows what use

man will make of his freedom. With Him, there are no caprices, no surprises. His answers to our prayers are not concessions wrung from Him by unforeseen, importunate petitioners. *They are part of a spiritual order of things, predestined from eternity.*

In the last analysis, there are only two fundamental explanations of the universe: the spiritual and the materialistic. The dominating Cause must either be eternal Intelligence or eternal Matter, both equally incomprehensible to finite minds. The only satisfactory interpretation of the Cosmos is that given by Christ, which has, for its foundation, belief in a personal God who, as a Father, loveth and careth for His children. Reject that explanation, destroy communication between the human soul and its Creator, between the child and its Father, and man becomes the helpless victim of a material fatalism, "without hope and without God in the world." Throughout the depths of space he finds no mind, no moral law, no pity, and no love! The unintelligent and unintelligible universe of suns and systems is moving there without a purpose! Mere senseless shapes of matter, those resplendent orbs silently oscillate, æon after æon, from chaos into cosmos and from cosmos back to chaos—it is all meaningless movement, the eternal ebb and flow of some inexplicable tide in an undiscovered, undiscoverable sea!

That is the terrible characteristic of modern scepticism. It mocks at the supernatural. It makes of the universe a desert, but produces not a single vivifying stream of water to relieve its aridity. It denies, derides, defaces, and destroys, and finally leaves one facing an infinite void. Out of negation comes nothingness. *Ex nihilo nihil.*

Algar Thorold,* in his essay on the French writer, Joris Karl Huysmans, thus describes the hideous hopelessness of life in such a senseless universe: "It ends but to recommence, blindly throwing up from the depths of the Unconscious millions of conscious organisms. . . . For a few seconds the world reaches the point of self-consciousness and mirrors itself in the passive contemplation of a human mind, before sinking again into the unconscious eternity, on the surface of which organic life itself is but a ripple."

Such an appalling solution of the riddle of existence breeds despair and madness, unless a way of escape from it be found. Happily Huysmans found it, and finally became a humble, devout, and believing Catholic, contemporaneously with several other eminent French writers, scholars, and scientists—among whom were Brunetière, François Coppée, Paul Bourget, and Littré. All these men, about the beginning of this century, either became converts or else returned to their former Catholic Faith.

* *Six Masters in Disillusion*, Constable & Co., London, 1909, pp. 86, 93, 94.

Huysmans' biographer writes of him: "He came to acquiesce, with the full fervour of intense conviction, in the [Christian] doctrines . . . and I cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that never was there a more sincere conversion than that of Huysmans."

* * * * * *

Petitionary prayer is evidently a part of Christ's programme for the evolution of His earthly kingdom, in whose coming we are intended thus to co-operate with Him. Prayer does not change God's will. On the contrary, *His will is that we pray.* He tells us so repeatedly. Of all His promises none is so unrestricted in its amplitude as that which guarantees to us an answer to our supplications. That answer may not be the one we hope for, for we may ask for something which infinite Wisdom sees is not adapted to our needs. But, if it is in accordance with His will and wisdom, it will be granted. The spirit of petition must be that of the Master in Gethsemane: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. . . . Nevertheless, Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Does such prayer seem incomprehensible? Well, what then? Do we understand the half of what we believe is true? Glib, superficial, third-class scientists will answer yes, and say, "there are no more mysteries!" But great minds answer No. For we are finite; God is infinite. If we refused to believe everything that presents difficulties to our comprehension, in what could we believe? It is enough for us that we follow the instinctive craving of our hearts for prayer, and that we obey in this respect His positive injunction.

* * * * * *

We recognize the effects of other mysterious forces in the universe, and believe in them. Why do we hesitate to recognize the consequences of the *force of prayer?* Do we not see its results continually, and have not these results the testimony of millions? What, if amid the other "laws" of the world there is a law of prayer? Can we believe that numberless praying Christians have been allowed for ages to cherish a chimera and believe a lie? And in that case, a lie uttered by whom? By Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For His attitude in respect to petitionary prayer is indubitable. Not only was His human life pre-eminently one long spiritual communion with His Father in the desert and the mountain solitudes, but His prayers were often distinguished from those of adoration or thanksgiving by their perfect expression of the spirit of supplication. On the evening before His death, He prayed to His Father—in His human nature—as a suppliant: "Father, the hour is come. I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do . . . I pray for them whom Thou hast given me . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name . . . I pray, not that Thou shouldst take them out of

the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also may be with me."

It may perhaps be said that Christ's petitions to the Father have nothing to do with us. But when His disciples said to Him: "Lord, teach *us* how to pray," He breathed for them that perfect prayer for ever associated with His name, and in this we find not only the petition for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of His kingdom, and the fulfilment of His will, but also, explicitly, the request that they should receive the most essential recompense of earthly toil: *their daily bread.*

* * * * * *

But it was not only by *example* that Jesus taught us to pray. His *commands* on this point are unmistakable and often repeated: "*Ask*, and it shall be given unto you; *seek*, and you shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you. . . . If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that *ask Him?* . . . Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest. . . . Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree concerning anything whatsoever *they shall ask*, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven. . . . Watch and *pray*, lest ye enter into temptation. . . . I go to the Father, and *whatsoever you shall ask* the Father in my name, that will I do. . . . *If ye shall ask me anything* in my name, that will I do . . . That *whatsoever* you shall *ask* of the Father in my name He may give it you. . . . Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name. *Ask, and ye shall receive*, that your joy may be full! . . ."

Now, if language means anything, these words assure us that it is not only our privilege, but our duty to pray, as suppliants.

St. Bernard used to say to his monks: "You believe firmly in Christ's promises concerning the future world, but you have little faith in His promises pertaining to this one. Yet the same lips that said those things which you believe, uttered those which you are slow to believe."

Prayer is, in fact, the spiritual atmosphere in which the Church lives and moves and has its being. Without prayer it would perish like an animal placed in the vacuum of an exhausted receiver. It is literally true that "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath"; and what makes prayer as natural as breathing, *is the omnipresence and immanence of God.* At any moment and in any place, our Father can be spoken to.

Not only before the Altar
  Through incense-laden air,
Not only in Missal and Psalter
  Is God approached in prayer.

At night, when we wake to stillness,
  At dawn, when we face the day,
In weary hours of illness,—
  In death . . . we may always pray.

Perhaps in the street's confusion
  It is but a whispered word,
Yet a cry from the soul's seclusion
  Is a prayer that is always heard.

It may be an exclamation,
  A sigh, a glance, a sign,—
It still is an aspiration
  Towards God and the Life Divine.

And the sigh and the glance are heeded,
  For God is everywhere,
And the help the soul hath needed
  Is given then and there.

To take away from the followers of Christ this intimate communion with God and to destroy their belief in the efficacy of their supplications, would be like removing their vocal chords, leaving them speechless in an hour of danger. It is too monstrous to contemplate, for it not only contradicts the instinctive impulse of our human nature, but also violates, as we have seen, the positive command of Christ. Yet this precisely is what many Modernists to-day are doing in the very heart of the Christian churches! The leading interpreter of Modernism in America, already mentioned, asserts: "I do not believe that the religion of to-morrow will have any more place for petition than it will have for *any other form of magic!*"

If this were merely an expression of one individual, it might not be important; but, coming from a prominent member of the Modernist group, it is significant. How far does that remark represent the views of the rest of them? It would seem impossible for people to call themselves Christians, *who ridicule the mode of prayer which Christ commanded and exemplified.* What is the Christ they talk of? It surely is not the Christ of the Gospels. It is a figure of their own invention.

Another instance of this Modernist spirit is the following: The rector of an Episcopal church in New York has declared that Christ and His disciples developed a highly efficient *technique of healing* and employed methods which only recently *have been adopted with success in our more modern clinics!* Two answers can be made to this assumption that Jesus performed His miracles of healing by methods which our best hospitals are using. One is that we will believe it when our best physicians raise people from the dead and

themselves rise from the dead three days after their decease. The other is, that if Jesus used, in performing His miracles, methods which were not supernatural, then He was an impostor, for He repeatedly appealed to such acts as the works of His Father and as *proofs of His own divinity.* Any Modernist clergyman who ignores these two features of the supernatural works of Jesus and puts them on the level of up-to-date doctors and surgeons, would seem to have no legitimate place as a teacher in the Church of Christ.

* * * * * *

We come then once more squarely face to face with the new "reformers" who wish to eliminate, together with miracles, something which is absolutely vital to the Church of Christ, namely, *petitionary prayer.*

Upon them rests a fearful responsibility, for the point is crucial. Yet so bitter and implacable is their hostility to everything supernatural in human affairs, that any prayer for divine intervention is discouraged or ridiculed. The Catholic Church meets them unflinchingly and stands in this respect, as in all others, steadfast and immovable in doctrine, like a huge mountain boulder in a madly rushing stream.

Survey for a moment the present spiritual situation of the Occident. All who have leisure for reflection, and who live sufficiently apart from the rush of modern life to observe it objectively, must seriously ask themselves whither mankind is recklessly hastening.

The dissolution of Protestantism and the lessening influence of religion, through lack of proper education, have given rise to a population of virtual (but not always virtuous) Pagans, who are living solely for gain or pleasure, and are materialists in conduct and atheists in creed. During the world war I often pondered on the fearful drama, in which so many nations were playing their tragic rôles; and, as the horrors daily multiplied and massacres continued to appall mankind, I asked myself repeatedly whether out of all that physical and mental agony a better civilization would be born. After more than ten years of "peace," I do not think that such has thus far been the case. It is not a higher or better civilization that has replaced the old. On the contrary, the greater part of Europe and America has retrograded morally, religiously, and even intellectually. I leave the element of *material* prosperity out of the question, for in comparison with the other points, that is of vastly less importance; but even in that sphere great multitudes of once well-educated, prosperous people are suffering acutely from hunger, penury, and unemployment, while certain areas of Europe have reverted practically to semi-barbarism. To be a smiling optimist to-day one must be either ignorant or callous. However conflicting the economic reports from

Russia may be, there can be no doubt that the present Government of that unhappy country is Antichrist incarnate. It is now considered a crime there to give children (even the two millions of homeless ones) any sort of religious instruction, and women are incarcerated in vile prisons for merely reading the Bible to them. Christian churches and cloisters, and it is said even synagogues and mosques, are turned into barracks or cinematograph halls, and every method, including torture, is employed officially to bring all religions, but Christianity especially, into ridicule and contempt.

The first Universities of Atheism ever known in the world have lately been established in Leningrad and Moscow. The former has already three hundred students, forty-seven of whom are women. The object of these institutions is to destroy religion, and the students are to be trained to become destructive atheists. This is militant atheism on a gigantic scale, such as the world has never seen.

* * * * * *

The malady from which our world is perishing is godlessness. Many who cannot look through nature up to nature's God, assure us that the hypothesis of a Creator is no longer needed. Monsieur Viviani once shouted triumphantly: "We have put out the lights of heaven." But somehow men are thereby made no happier or better. They are consumed with restlessness and discontent. The world unconsciously is starving for soul-nourishment. Its hunger is not satisfied with sport, or speed, or sensuality, or with all combined. Men are disgusted with life's endless treadmill in the quest of gold. Women, in spite of their bravado, are at heart ashamed of their increasing nudity and secretly lament their lost prestige. The consciousness of terrible political injustices, based on lies and intrigue, gnaws at society's vitals like an ulcer. The happiness which the modern generation feverishly seeks is like the "champagne," drained by an actor with apparent rapture from an empty cup, while Death stands waiting in the wings. The pursuit of pleasure, especially of voluptuousness, breeds melancholy, disenchantment, and despair. Behind the laugh there lurks a yawn, sometimes a tear. The almost universal sentiment in those who have no faith in God or hope of immortality, is life-weariness. They feel a horrible disgust for the emptiness of existence. It is the *tedium vitæ* of the ancients. As with them, the number of our suicides increases. We have so many wonderful inventions and material luxuries, that we are surfeited. As fast as we create them they enslave us, and many of them are avowedly, in case of war, to be applied to human massacre. And thus we whirl to the abyss awaiting us upon a flood of petrol, illumined by electric light.

Yet man is the master of his destiny. His will is free. His fate depends upon his choice. Modernism denies this and gives him over to a philosophy of animalism and the tyranny of instinct. But the testimony of consciousness repels the sneer of the professor. It tells us that we are not mere automata. We cannot put aside that inward evidence as valueless. Conscience, Free Will, and Moral Responsibility are the foundations of the ethical and social order of the world. Civilization means self-control. In the last analysis the Spiritual alone has worth. The unseen world is the fundamental one, even in science. The decay of faith marks the decay of character, and the decay of character is the social cancer, for which there is no cure.

Chapter IV

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPELS

"We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower-fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read."

WHITTIER.

"The Christian tradition is four times more certain than profane history." AUGUSTIN THIERRY.

TO-DAY, if we make our way over the far-flung battlefield, so long contended for respectively by the heroic Paladins of the Faith and the aggressive Giants of Unbelief, we find the ruins of abandoned bulwarks, the wreckage of discarded systems and the graves of many ambitious hopes. But over all we gaze with gratitude and joy on the uplifted and triumphant Cross of Christ. *In hoc signo vinces!*

But, it may be objected, all the testimony which has thus far been brought forward in support of the claims, the miracles, and the divinity of Jesus is based upon the Gospels and the Epistles. How do we know that these are authentic and trustworthy? If they are not, then the claims of Christ have no historical foundation, and the stories of His life and death and resurrection may be myths. This assertion is not wholly correct. Precious, important, and invaluable as the books of the New Testament are, we must not forget that thousands of early Christian believers never saw or read them; and this for the very good reason that these documents had not yet been written. Multitudes of Jews and Gentiles were converted by apostolic, oral teaching only and were instructed and guided solely by the traditions of the Church. They merely heard the spoken word, and, hearing, believed and were baptized. It is, therefore, literally true that a man could even now, conceivably, be a Catholic without possessing the New Testament.

Gradually, as the different local churches multiplied and became too widely scattered to be often visited by the apostles, circular letters, or Epistles, were written to them by St. Paul, St. Peter, St.

John, and others, which were read aloud and passed around among the faithful. Then, as more and more churches were established for both Jews and Gentiles in lands remote from Palestine, whose members were desirous of learning all they could of the life of Jesus, whom they had never seen, the Gospels also one by one came into existence, and copies or translations of the originals were made by hand and sent about from church to church. The night of paganism became bright with stars.

* * * * * *

To be convincing or authoritative, books must bear their authors' names. The more illustrious these are the better. If a deliberate falsification had been intended by the writers of the Gospels, some well-known literary or philosophical sponsors would have been invented for them. But what could have been humbler than the names which actually vouched for them? The first Gospel was ascribed to an inconspicuous tax-collector, Matthew; the second to the unknown secretary (Mark) of a Galilean fisherman, Peter; the third to an obscure physician of Antioch, Luke; the last to another Galilean boatman, John.

Considering the contents of the books, this seems incredible. In fact, it is incredible, if we ignore the aid and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Rationalists, who will not hear of such a supernatural coadjutor, have always considered the question of the authorship of the Gospels, Acts and Epistles as a matter of supreme importance. But they have never been able to find any other credible authors for the Gospels than those unknown peasants, who claimed to be contemporaries and even eye-witnesses of the deeds described. Hence they have been compelled to veil the origins of these incomparable manuscripts in mystery, to hide them in the mists of time and to call them mythical accretions or sacerdotal frauds. For if it could be demonstrated that Luke was the author of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and also, as the comrade of St. Paul, was intimately acquainted with every detail of his apostolic life; and if it could be also proved that Matthew, John, and Peter (through Mark) were the authors of the Gospels commonly ascribed to them, we should get back to men whose testimony could not be impugned.

"If," said Strauss, "it could be proved that the Bible history was composed by eyewitnesses, or even by men contemporary with the events, the orthodox would win their case."* Accordingly every possible attempt has been made to overthrow the Church's primitive tradition on this subject. What was that tradition? It was that the four Gospels were written before the close of the first century; the

* *Das Leben Jesu.*

first three between the years 50 and 70; the fourth between 80 and 100. Furthermore, that their respective authors were Matthew, the apostle; Mark, the companion of Peter; Luke, the physician and attendant of Paul; and John, the beloved disciple of Jesus.

* * * * * *

The controversy which ensued about this theme was long and bitter. Innumerable attacks were made against the Christian stronghold from all conceivable points and with the sharpest intellectual weapons. Moreover, these assaults were led by some of the ablest exegetes and critics who have ever lived. Who were those desperate leaders in that cause which now is lost? Among the most conspicuous were Ferdinand Christian Baur and his pupil, David Friedrich Strauss. These were Christianity's boldest enemies in the first half of the nineteenth century. The former attributed the Gospels to deliberate deception, the latter to a legendary growth.

The theory of deception has long since been dismissed as incompatible with the facts. The simple, unsophisticated natures of the humble apostles and disciples of Christ make the invention of such an elaborate plot as this would have been, impossible. Nor were they capable of conceiving such a character as that of Christ or of putting into His mouth such sublime discourses and ethical precepts. Moreover, the converts made by the apostles were soon too busy in preaching, teaching, and administering the new churches to think of carrying on such a vast conspiracy in all the prominent cities of the Roman empire. To invent, to propagate, and to die for a complicated mass of lies, which could easily be disproved, is incredible. The converts who accepted the new religion were not an ignorant rabble. Humble people at first, their number soon included persons of education, rank, and scholarship, who were too intelligent and too critical to believe assertions of such a nature recklessly, and above all to receive without careful examination documents purporting to have been written by the apostles.

The mythical theory of Strauss was scarcely less improbable. Mythology of the ancient Greek and Roman type is comprehensible at an earlier stage of civilization; but this was not the age of Homer, but of Augustus, Seneca and Tacitus. Under these circumstances, that a mere myth should have arisen and have spread with such rapidity throughout the world, may be regarded as impossible. The growth of a myth requires time; and this both Strauss and Baur saw so plainly that, to support their theories, they were obliged to assign the origins of the Gospels to as late a date as they dared propose. So long as the contemporaries of Jesus and the apostles were alive to refute falsehoods and to repudiate unfounded stories, neither hypothesis was feasible. Accordingly, Baur fixed the appear-

ance of Matthew's Gospel at about A.D. 130, the Gospels of Mark and Luke somewhat later, and that of John at about the year 170.

Even this did not satisfy Strauss. He knew that much more time was needed for his mythical theory, and estimated the date of the first three Gospels at about 150, and that of John much later.

* * * * * *

Their difficulties were certainly great; for the apostolic age began *immediately* after the death of Christ, and Christian churches were founded with miraculous rapidity. Around the Mediterranean, which was then virtually a Roman lake, these churches were in constant communication with one another. Unconsciously Rome's legions had contributed to the conquest of the world for Christ. After the empire had given *the pax Romana* to its subjects, travelling became safe. Pompey had swept the seas of pirates. Along the military roads, which extended, paved with broad stone slabs, from the Golden Milestone in the Forum to the limits of the world, there passed incessantly chariots, horsemen, pedestrians and a regular imperial post, which travelled at about four miles an hour. Among them also came the first apostles, their messengers and many converts to the new-born faith, hurrying to and fro, and everywhere "saluting the brethren."

As early as the year 43, in the city of Antioch, the followers of Jesus were first called Christians; that is to say, only ten years after the Crucifixion they were sufficiently numerous, widely dispersed and marked in character to be called by a distinctive name! If Jerusalem was the cradle of the Church, Antioch was its place of baptism.

Hardly more than twenty years after the death of Jesus, and while thousands of His contemporaries were still alive, there appeared in circulation the four great Epistles of St. Paul, which are universally accepted as genuine—Romans, Galatians, and the two Corinthians; and these revealed the doctrine and the life of Christ, as the Gospels themselves were soon to exhibit them in detail. In less than thirty years after the death of Jesus, Christianity had obtained even in Rome a following so great that it excited first the attention and then the persecution of the authorities. In these twenty or thirty years and under such conditions it is impossible that a fanciful, unhistoric myth could have so established itself. This is the more indubitable from the fact that as soon as the Epistles and Gospels began to be copied and passed from church to church, the facts and doctrines thus revealed became the common inviolable property of the Church and were treasured sacredly by the early Christians. This they would naturally in any case have done, but they had also been admonished to do so. St. Paul, for example, wrote to the Galatians: "Though

we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which I have preached unto you, let him be accursed "* : and to Timothy : " These things teach and exhort . . . O Timothy, *keep that which is committed to thy trust*, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called."† " Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me. . . . Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost."‡

St. John also writes in his Epistles : "*Let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you.*"§ " Whosoever revolteth and continueth not in the doctrine hath not God."||

* * * * * *

Such warnings were needed. Denials and calumnies had been immediately invented against the Christians by the hostile Jews. Thus Matthew tells us in his record of the resurrection¶ : " And some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they, being assembled . . . gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying : ' Say you, His disciples came by night and stole him away when we were asleep. . . .' So they, taking the money, did as they were taught, and this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day."

But whenever the enemies of Christ were bold enough to call the history of Jesus a fable, or the religion which He founded a fraud, voices were at once raised in refutation and indignant protest. The speeches of Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, and Paul, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, give abundant proof of this. These were followed by the testimony of the newly appointed bishops, Timothy and Titus, the eloquent Apollos, the Church Fathers like Polycarp, friend of St. John, Ignatius, Origen, the refuter of the heretic Celsus, and countless other Christians, scattered, yet united, throughout the mighty empire, including those who were " of Cæsar's household."

Nothing could shake the faith and the conviction of those who had actually seen the risen Christ and had exclaimed with Thomas : " My Lord and my God."

Among these primitive churches, pulsating with life and enthusiasm, and bound together in the faith imparted to them by men who sealed their testimony with their blood, there was no chance for either fraud or mythical inventions. The divinely appointed institution of the Lord's Supper, the gatherings in the Catacombs for the worship of their glorified Lord, and the ceaseless prayers and wonderful martyrdoms of the faithful render it certain that the

* i. 8, 9. † I, vi. 20. ‡ II, i. 13, 14.
§ I, ii. 24. || II, i. 9. ¶ Matt. xxviii 11–15.

early Church was not alone saintly, but sincere and steadfast in the faith.

Moreover, some of the writers of the Gospels and Epistles were still living at the very time when their words were read aloud in the churches, and known throughout all the Christian communities. A mistake about the origin of the Gospels among the contemporaries of their authors is therefore almost inconceivable. For on every Sunday the "Memoirs of the Gospels" were read aloud to the congregations of Christians. They were known almost by heart. Any alteration in them would have been immediately noticed and resented. This is expressly stated by Justin Martyr,* who was put to death under Marcus Aurelius about 165.

As these irrefutable facts confronted the discouraged critics, their various theories about the origins of Christianity became mutually destructive. Bitter controversies ensued within the ranks of the Rationalists themselves. One theorist denounced another. New combatants entered the field. Among them was Bruno Baur, who was even more radical than his predecessor Ferdinand. Great exegetes and critics like De Wette, Hase, Ewald, Schenkel, and Renan rejected his ideas; but others supported him, and the fight went on. To describe the varying fortunes of the hosts engaged would require an entire volume. Gradually, however, as the nineteenth century neared its close, the extreme "Tübingens" lost ground. Scholars like Theodor Keim, Hilgenfeld, H. J. Holtzmann, Weiss, Harnack, and Zahn drew nearer to the old orthodox view. They differed somewhat still about the dates of the first three Gospels, but gradually these were reduced, till Harnack's computation sank to the year 65 for Matthew and 93 for Luke, or very likely earlier †; and Zahn's to the year 60 for the first Gospel and 75 for the third. These are practically in harmony with the tradition of the Church.

* * * * * *

But let us satisfy ourselves on this point by a more detailed examination. What testimony was there, after all, for that old tradition of the primitive Church? Among the earliest Christians it was, of course, the oral testimony of contemporaries, many of whom had been eye- and ear-witnesses of the facts and were well aware of the authorship of both Gospels and Epistles. This testimony therefore became a part of the *depositum veritatis* of the Church, transmitted from one century to another.

But to this succeeded *written* testimony. This was of two kinds; external and internal, that is, the testimony given by pagan writers

* Justin Martyr (103–165), in his *Apologia*, I, 66–67.

† *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 217–277 (1908).

‡ *Einleitung in das N.T.*, II, 432, 440 (1899).

outside the Church and that which was furnished by the Christians themselves. The former are invaluable contributors to the authenticity of the Gospels, for they cannot be suspected of partizanship. They were naturally few in number at the beginning. Christianity had to make itself known before it could be talked of. The public life of Jesus had lasted only three years, Palestine was a tiny and comparatively unimportant portion of the Roman empire, Nazareth one of its obscurest villages, and Jesus Himself was an unknown member of an obnoxious race, who had not even been a revolutionary or rebel against Rome, and had died as a reputed malefactor. Why should the Roman writers mention Him, *until his followers forced Him on their notice?* Suetonius, who seems to have thought that Jesus was still alive, says in his *Life of Claudius*, Chap. XXV: "Since the Jews were constantly making disturbances at the instigation of *Chrestus*, he (Claudius) expelled them from Rome." The name he uses was another form of Christus. Tacitus employed the correct form in his *Annals*, XV, 44, where he says: "Nero" (in order to get rid of the report that he had set fire to Rome) "fastened the guilt of this, and inflicted the most exquisite tortures, on a class, who were called Christians by the populace, and hated for their abominations. Christus, from whom their name originated, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus." Tacitus then describes the horrible forms of death inflicted on the Christians, who were clad in the skins of beasts and torn to pieces by ferocious dogs, or nailed to crosses, covered with pitch and burned as torches. Nero offered his circus and gardens for the spectacle! Tacitus adds that these horrors awakened among the people a feeling of compassion. But it was not of long duration, for Nero thus created in the Roman rabble a thirst for Christian blood, which was not to be sated for two hundred and fifty years. It was during this persecution by Nero that the apostles Peter and Paul were put to death, the former by crucifixion, the latter (since he was a Roman citizen) by the sword. Tacitus probably confused the Christians with the Jews in general and credited the rumours spread abroad by Nero's agents as a justification of his crimes. Pliny the Younger, a friend of Tacitus and writing* as Governor of Bithynia in the year 97, informs the emperor Trajan that the Christians worship Christ as God, and by Him are admonished to observe a strict code of morality. This famous letter should be read at length, together with the emperor's reply, approving Pliny's conduct towards the Christians and commanding him to pay no attention to anonymous denunciations, which he calls a pernicious example "no longer suited to our times."

* * * * * *

* *Epistles* X, 96.

A little later, when the doctrines of Christianity and the life of Jesus had become better known to the Roman world, the philosopher Celsus, a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius and the earliest literary opponent of the Christian faith, made, in 178, his famous attack upon the new religion, which led to the still more celebrated reply (*Contra Celsum*) by the Church Father Origen (186–253). This reply has come down to us in its entirety. It fills eight books, and in these Origen refutes his antagonist practically paragraph by paragraph. Hence Origen by his quotations has reproduced for us almost the entire text of Celsus, which otherwise would have been lost.

In one place Celsus declares: "I could say much more about the history of Jesus; that is, much that is true and not like the *written stories of his disciples*." These last words are significant. Celsus expressed no doubt of the fact that the Evangelists were the authors of the Books ascribed to them, but took the Christian view of their apostolic origin for granted. Indeed, according to Origen, he expressly said so. It is plain, therefore, that, although he attacked, ridiculed and endeavoured to refute the *contents* of the Gospels, *he still believed in their apostolic authorship*.

The same can be said of other antagonists of Christianity, notably of Porphyrius (233–305). They were all clever men and used their undeniable talents in an attempt to prove the Gospels a mass of absurdities. Could they have proved that the New Testament writings were forgeries, they would assuredly have done so. The numerous quotations made by Celsus from the Gospels demonstrate conclusively that he had them before him in their present textual form; and more important still is the fact that he assumed their authenticity as indubitable. Dr. Felder says of Celsus: "It was for him a certainty that the Gospels originated with the apostles and that the apocryphal Gospels were only imitations of the real ones. He criticized Christianity and especially the Gospels in the sharpest way, but he was in a position to judge of their genuineness or spuriousness, and must have done so. Proof of their post-apostolic origin would have been a death-blow to the religion which he hated. Hence, if he did not produce such a proof, it must have been because he felt himself unable to invalidate the facts. This testimony is conclusive."

Another instance is afforded us by Julian the Apostate (331–363), the bitterest enemy of Christianity, who attempted to restore to the world the cult of perishing Paganism. This Roman emperor had at his disposal all the anti-Christian arguments which had been invented by the heretics of the first three centuries; but he attributed, as a matter of course, the authorship of the Gospels and Epistles to the men whose names they bore. This made a profound

impression upon St. Jerome. "I wish for no other proof of the authenticity of our Gospels," he said, "than the avowals of Celsus and Porphyry."

St. Irenæus (130–208), also an authority on the heresies of the earliest times, proclaimed to the world, about the year 180, that "so great is the certainty in regard to our Gospels, that the heretics themselves give testimony to them . . . If, therefore, our enemies testify for us and make use of our Gospels, the evidence which they produce in their behalf stands sure and true."*

In this work also Irenæus quotes from each of the Gospels, Matthew, Luke and John, nearly one hundred passages, and from Mark about a dozen. Justin Martyr quotes eighteen passages; Clement of Alexandria, 577; Tertullian, 1550. If the Gospels had ever been lost, these passages would have been almost sufficient to restore them.

Another point, seldom sufficiently emphasized in this connection, is the fact that, entirely apart from the question of the dates and authorship of the Gospels, it would be easy to construct the essential doctrines of Christianity, *even without the Gospels*, from the following documents, all of which are now almost universally accepted as authentic: The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians and Corinthians; the first Epistle of St. Peter, the Epistle of St. James, the Apocalypse and the Acts of the Apostles. These carry us back certainly as far as the year 60—some much earlier—less than thirty years after the death of Christ!

* * * * * *

But we have yet to consider the testimony which writers *inside* the Church of Christ give to the authenticity of the Gospels and Epistles. Probably no student of the subject now doubts that Matthew was the author of the first Gospel. The only question that disturbs some modern critics is whether he wrote it *only* in the Aramaic tongue (the form of Hebrew used by Jesus and His disciples), or whether he wrote it also in Greek. The point is of minor importance. Undoubtedly it was translated from Aramaic into Greek by someone, probably by Matthew himself, at the earliest possible date, in order to give the Grecian version to the Gentiles; and it is this Gospel that we have and which in the second century was already designated as "The Gospel according to Matthew." Papias, a contemporary disciple of St. John, affirms, in a book, fragments of which the Church Father Eusebius (A.D. 264–340) presented in his *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 39, that Matthew composed his Gospel in Hebrew; and St. Irenæus (born about 130), Bishop of Lyons, testifies: "Matthew wrote the Gospel for the Jews in their own

* *Adversus Haereticos*, III, xi, 8.

language at the time when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, and founding the Church there."*

According to this, the apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel in Palestine about the year 63–64, for that is the only time when Peter and Paul could have been together in the capital of the empire.

Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, at the end of the third century also wrote: "Matthew, wishing to preach to other nations besides the Jews, wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and filled thus the void which his absence was to make among them."†

Pope St. Clement, whom Paul calls his fellow-worker,‡ and *whom Peter appointed Bishop of the Church of Rome*, wrote in the years 95–97 a letter to the Corinthians in which he quotes freely at least ten passages out of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. "Hence," says Dr. Felder, "the successor of St. Peter, in whose ears still echoed the preaching of the apostles and also of many others who had been instructed by the apostles, *received the Synoptic Gospels directly from the hands of their authors*, watched over them and transmitted them to posterity as a precious treasure.

"Whether the Gospel of St. John was also in their possession, cannot be positively determined; but if not, it need not surprise us, for this Gospel originated almost at the same time as the letter of St. Clement and first appeared in Asia Minor, so that it could scarcely have become known yet in Rome."§

* * * * * *

That the second Gospel was written by Mark, the pupil of Peter, is now almost unanimously conceded. Again Eusebius tells us‖: "According to the priest John of Ephesus, Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote down exactly all that the latter had remembered of the deeds and words of Jesus Christ; not in absolute sequence, for Mark had never heard the Lord or followed Him. He merely recorded the language of the apostle Peter, when that apostle *was preaching the doctrines of Christ*."

Clement of Alexandria and his pupil Origen (both members of the patriarchate of Alexandria, which Mark had founded) confirm this statement. The report of Clement of Alexandria, who was born about A.D. 150, and who tells us that his youth went back to the first successors of the apostles, is particularly noteworthy: "While Peter was preaching the word of God at Rome and under the inspiration of God was proclaiming the Gospel there, his many auditors begged Mark, who had long been Peter's companion and who remembered all that Peter said, to write these things down, and,

* *Adversus Haereticos*, III, 1.
† *Hist. eccl.*, III, 24.
‡ Philippians, iv. 3.
§ *Christ and the Critics*, I, p. 48.
‖ *Ibid.*, III, 39.

when he should have written his Gospel, to leave it with them; and Peter, having been informed of this project, neither opposed nor urged it."*

St. Jerome thus sums up the tradition of the first centuries: "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, wrote a concise Gospel, based on what he had heard from the apostle Peter; who, having heard it read, approved it, and authorized its publication, that it might be read in the Church."†

Mark, therefore, composed his Gospel in Rome about the end of Peter's life, that is, about the year 64.

* * * * * *

Around the authorship of the third Gospel the battle of the critics was a fierce one; not on exegetical or historical grounds so much as from that everlasting and implacable hostility which modern Rationalists feel towards the intrusion of the supernatural and miraculous into human affairs, past or present. As we have elsewhere said, they exclude in advance from the discussion any consideration of the possibility of a divine intervention. "If," wrote Renan, "those miracles ever really took place, then my book is nothing but a tissue of errors. If the miracles and inspiration of certain books are actual occurrences, our method is detestable."

To Strauss, Renan and other noted Rationalists, Luke's Gospel was especially objectionable, because of the miraculous element which it contains, particularly in the preliminary chapters which minutely relate the announcements made by the Angel Gabriel to Zacharias of the birth of John the Baptist and to Mary of the birth of Jesus, as well as the song of the angelic choir, the story of the shepherds of Bethlehem, and their visit to the manger where the infant Jesus lay.

This attitude of the hostile critics is not, however, a valid argument against Luke's authorship of the third Gospel, which, for the moment, is what especially concerns us. This is established by the same line of reasoning and evidence which has confirmed the authenticity of the first two Gospels. Irenæus tells us: "Luke, the companion of Paul, wrote down the Gospel which the latter preached."‡

A remarkable piece of testimony is furnished also by the *Muratorian Fragment*, which is an ancient catalogue of the sacred writings which were attributed to the Prophets and Apostles and for that reason could be read aloud at divine service. This catalogue was composed about the year 170 and was discovered by the distinguished

* *Christ and the Critics*, VI, 14.
† *De Viris illustribus*, Ch. VIII; *Epis.* CXX, 16.
‡ *Hær.*, III, 1; XIV, 1.

scholar Muratori in the Ambrosian library in Milan. In this occurs the following passage:

"In the third place comes the Gospel of St. Luke. Luke was the physician whom Paul had taken as his companion, and he wrote this Gospel under his own name. He had not indeed himself seen the Lord in the flesh; but having gained his information from the highest sources possible, began his recital with the birth of John the Baptist."* Eusebius also placed this Gospel among the sacred books universally recognized as authentic by the early Church.† Finally, in St. Jerome (340–420) we find the following: "Luke, the Syrian physician, a native of Antioch and a disciple of the apostle Paul, composed his book in the countries of Achaia and Boeotia." (*Prologue.*)

According to this, the third Gospel may have been written between the years 63–67, during St. Paul's last missionary journey after his liberation in Rome in 63.

A strong argument in favour of the belief that the first three Gospels were written before the year 70 is the fact that all of them‡ depict the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem *as still unfulfilled.* If that terrible catastrophe, so poignantly described by Josephus, had taken place before the Evangelists had written their Gospels, they certainly would not have passed over it in silence. On the contrary, the prophecy *and its fulfilment* would have both been triumphantly recorded, as evidence of the prescience of Christ.

That the Acts of the Apostles was also the work of Luke, who accompanied Paul upon his journeys and recorded what he saw and experienced, is now almost universally conceded. After the latest exhaustive works of Harnack§ and B. Weiss|| on the subject, the question of the authorship of the Acts would seem to be definitely settled; and it will be remembered that these two brilliant scholars are not Catholics, but Liberal Protestant exegetes¶. Even Renan says: "The author of the third Gospel is certainly the same as that of the Acts of the Apostles; and the author of the Acts is a

* Valtoger, *Int. historique et critique aux livres du N.T.*, Vol. I, 76, tr. from Reithmayer.

† Hist. Eccl., III, 4.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 36; xxiv. 15–24; Mark xiii. i; Luke xix. 41–44.

§ *Lukas, der Artz. Die apostel. Geschichte* (1907).

|| B. Weiss, *Die Quellen der synoptischen Ueberlieferung*, p. 220 (1908).

¶ It is especially interesting to note that Harnack who, until 1906, had held the opinion that Luke wrote only between the years 78 and 93, has now become convinced that he was in error, and brings forward "very weighty observations" in favour of the view that "The Acts (and therefore the Gospel also) were composed already *at the beginning of the 'sixties.*" *Apostolische Geschichte*, p. 219.

companion of St. Paul, a title which suits Luke perfectly." Also in *Les Apôtres* (Introduction) he writes: "The author of the Acts is most certainly Luke, the disciple of Paul."*

* * * * * *

The Fourth was undoubtedly the last of the Gospels written, and Church tradition has unanimously ascribed its authorship to St. John. He was believed to have attained a great longevity, and the belief is well supported.† The reader will recall that the author relates in the last chapter the following incident: "Peter, turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on His breast at supper and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray Thee? Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not unto him: He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things.*"

Rationalistic critics, not content with this late date for the work of the fourth Evangelist, wished to bring the time of its composition well down into the second century. In this attempt they have not succeeded. The Gospel of St. John was known and commented on by the oldest Fathers, including St. Ignatius the martyr, St. Justin, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, and St. Irenæus. The document called the "Fragment of Muratori," already alluded to, states: "The fourth Gospel is the work of the disciple John. His fellow-disciples and bishops had urged him to write it, and he finally said to them: 'Fast with me three days, and we will then communicate to one another what shall have been revealed to each of us.' To one of them, the apostle Andrew, it was revealed that John should write everything under his own name; and all the others approved this."

Sr. Irenæus, who spent his youth with Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, the friend and *disciple of John*, wrote as follows: "John, the disciple of the Lord, whose head rested upon Jesus' breast, also published a Gospel, while he was living at Ephesus in Asia." In several other places Irenæus speaks of John's residence in Asia Minor, which hostile critics have tried to deny; but all the Elders who knew John in Asia are unanimous in declaring that it was he who related these things to them, for he lived there with them down to the reign of

* *Vie de Jésus.*

† St. John is believed to have died at Ephesus in the year 99, at the age of 94.

Trajan, who ascended the throne in the year 98. Irenæus adds that John's principal aim in writing his Gospel was to combat the heretical doctrines which were then appearing among the churches of Asia, and *which John in his Epistles also so vigorously condemns.* Clement of Alexandria also, in recounting what the early Elders had related to the Church, remarks: "John, the last of the apostles, having perceived that the *material* features of the life of the Lord had been chiefly dwelt upon by the other Evangelists . . . now composed a *spiritual* Gospel."

Another argument of the Rationalists against John's authorship of the fourth Gospel is the fact that it omits much that the first three Gospels contain, and relates much that is wanting in those "Synoptic" Gospels. For example, in his description of the crucifixion John recalls three utterances of Jesus omitted by the other Evangelists, and omits the four related by them. What is there strange in this?

I have never been able to see the force of this argument. On the contrary, I believe that precisely the fact of those differences confirms its genuineness. The aged apostle, then living in Asia Minor, no doubt had copies of the first three Gospels before him, as he wrote his own. Why should he repeat what the others had said and what was already well known? The most natural thing for him to do, under those circumstances, was to amplify their history and to relate many acts and words which the other Evangelists had omitted to record. Even so, he recognizes the fact that he cannot mention all of them; and in the last verse of his Gospel he expressly says: "And there are also *many other things* which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Another argument of the critics is based upon the different style and spirit of this Gospel. But John was temperamentally different from the other Evangelists. His was a peculiarly delicate and tender nature, and the wonderful discourses of the Master must have especially impressed themselves upon the mind and heart of "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Moreover, this tenderness of tone is also thoroughly in keeping with that of the Epistles of St. John and with the character of the man of all others to whom our Lord commended His Mother during His last moments on the Cross.

The great German exegete Ewald gives this testimony to the authorship of the fourth Gospel: "In proportion as the attacks on St. John have become more violent, the truth regarding him has been more solidly established; and at the present time the facts which we have before us are such that no man with a thorough knowledge of them, unless he wishes to choose error and reject the

truth, can have the audacity to claim that this holy Gospel is not the work of the apostle John."*

It is sometimes alleged by hostile critics that the apostle John could not have become so imbued with Grecian thought as the author of the fourth Gospel seems to have been. But it must be remembered that many years of St. John's long life and apostolic activity were passed in the Asian city of Ephesus, where the goddess Diana was worshipped and where the spirit of Hellenic thought and culture exerted a profound influence. It is not strange, therefore, that he should have availed himself of some of the prevalent Greek philosophical terms and thoughts in presenting his Gospel to those Gentile readers, as St. Paul had done in his discourse on the Hill of Mars in Athens. Now if there was one philosophical term used more than another in Greek speculation at that time, it was the word *Logos* (Word), employed by Plato to denote a manifestation or emanation (pure reason) of the supreme Being. Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.–A.D. 50) and other Jewish and Hellenic philosophers used the word in a somewhat more personal form than Plato had done; and finally John said of it what we read in the introduction to his Gospel. His thought must have been something like the following: You are all speaking of the Logos, but you do not fully understand what it means. I will tell you: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the *Word was God*. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. . . . And *this Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

This sublime prologue is not something extraneous to John's Gospel. On the contrary, it is the key to it. John's purpose in writing the fourth Gospel was to prove the divinity of Christ from the Master's own words and deeds. And it is because he does this with such marvellous clearness that the enemies of Christ have fought so desperately against its authenticity. If it had not contained the prologue and the farewell discourses (Chapters XIV–XVII), it would probably have passed the test of rationalistic criticism without special difficulty. For, as we have seen, it is the supreme desire and determination of these men to eliminate the supernatural from the Gospels and to accept as "genuine" only the parts which coincide with their views.

It is too often forgotten that St. John, in one of the closing verses of his Gospel, expressly claims for himself the authorship of that book: "This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these

* In reference to Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, August, 1883.

things and hath written these things, and we know that his testimony is true."

Where indeed could have been found at the end of the first century, or in any other century, another man capable of composing such an intimate recital of the life of Jesus and of inventing such discourses as are ascribed to Christ in the fourth Gospel? Such a book as that, the holiest ever written, cannot be one long deception.

Yet, since it was the unmistakable purpose of the author to represent himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," then if he were not that disciple he was an impostor, and the wonderful document is a shameful forgery. To anyone who has read that Gospel, so replete with the loftiest religious sentiment, such an idea is revolting and incredible.

A detailed account of the tremendous controversy which at one time raged about the authenticity and date of the fourth Gospel would fill a volume. Only the barest outline of it has been given here. But if the list of critics who have disputed it is a long one, the list of learned scholars who have defended it is still more voluminous. To the wellnigh endless catalogue of the latter, furnished by Watkins,* Dr. Hilarin Felder adds the names of twenty later writers—Catholics and Protestants—who repel the attacks upon the genuineness of John's Gospel. It is particularly worthy of note that among the hostile critics there has been a steady retrogression as regards this Gospel's date, from Baur (A.D. 170) to Nicholas, Renan, and Schenkel (110–115), down to Aube (100).† "To-day," says Dr. Felder, "the origin of the fourth Gospel is again generally assigned to the years of transition from the first to the second century."

Some years ago, the leading Protestant Liberal of Germany, Adolf Harnack, wrote: "In the criticism of the sources of primitive Christianity *we are without doubt returning to tradition.*"‡ This is still more evident among believing Christians to-day.

To this may be added the judgements of four distinguished experts: one, the Rationalist and scholar just mentioned, Harnack; another, one of the keenest minds and foremost writers in Europe, the late Houston Stewart Chamberlain; the third, Professor Ramsay, author of *The Church and the Roman Empire;* the fourth, Dr. Hilarin Felder, O.C., of Fribourg. Harnack writes of Baur: "The whole critical apparatus with which Baur disputed the old

* *Modern Criticism in its Relation to the fourth Gospel*, pp. 313–350 (London, 1890).

† See Felder's *Christ and the Critics*, Vol. I, 29.

‡ *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 3rd edition, II, 1 p. x.

tradition rightly passes to-day for worthless."* Of Strauss, Mr. Chamberlain says: "The progress of historical and critical research . . . causes Strauss' mythical theory to be regarded as so dead . . . that one cannot look through the pages of this worthy man without yawning audibly."†

Professor Ramsay writes: "In the case of almost all the books of the New Testament it is as grave an outrage on criticism to hold them for second century forgeries, as it would be to class the works of Horace and Virgil as forgeries of the time of Nero."

Felder's judgement of the conflict is as follows: "In reality, the rationalistic criticism of the Gospels has been a complete fiasco, and even the Liberal school of Ritschl and Harnack has surrendered one position after another to the historic tradition of the Church. Especially in the matter of the authenticity of the Gospels the points of difference have already been reduced to an insignificant minimum."‡

What conclusions, therefore, can we logically adopt after all this research, study, and controversy, of which the merest outline has been given here? I think the following can with certainty be held as true: That the followers of Christ are justified in concluding without hesitation or apology, that the Gospels and Epistles, as we have them, are perfectly authentic and are the respective works of those founders of the Christian Church and their immediate associates, whose names they bear.

And it is these Gospels, which at every Mass, on every day and many times a day, are read in all the countless Catholic churches of the world, and are reverently greeted by millions of worshippers, who rise and stand during the reading, in public testimony of their faith in those Gospels' authenticity and truth.

* * * * * *

If the air of the nineteenth century resounded with the clash of arms and the battle-cries of controversialists, the mental and spiritual atmosphere pervading the Occident to-day is permeated with the poison-gas of doubt. Not strong enough to do its deadly work at once, this noxious exhalation is gradually lethal in its effect on faith. Its ingredients are difficult to analyse. Modern scepticism is vague, because it lacks scholarship. It does not fight with arguments as formerly. It is content to emit an extremely volatile compound of sneers, assumptions, and disdainful phrases, such as: "All that

* *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Lit. bis Eusebius*, I, p. 244, note.

† *Die Grundlagen des* 19 *Jahrhunderts*, 8th edition, I, 27.

‡ *Christ and the Critics*, I. p. 30.

has been long since disproved," or "How can you be so far behind the times?"

A general impression is thus spread abroad that the former dates and authorships of the Gospels are no longer credible. This impression is not based upon knowledge, still less upon study. It is the result of sceptical miasma. In reality, the authenticity and credibility of the Books of the New Testament never stood on a firmer foundation than they do at present; and whoever will investigate with an unprejudiced mind the latest results of scholarly research into the origins of Christianity will recognize the truth of this statement.

The once destructive Tübingen cyclone is now over. From time to time we hear its waning echoes, like the mutterings of distant thunder; but the old "mythical" theory of Strauss, the "natural" explanation of Paulus, the "fraud" hypothesis of Baur, the sweetly sentimental rhetoric of Renan (no longer taken seriously by scholars), and all the rest of that once formidable host are to-day shadows of the past. Once in a while a Modernist brings out, as something new, some "natural" way in which a miracle of Jesus could have happened, borrowed apparently from poor old Paulus, long since laughed out of court; but, as a rule, the tombs of the Tübingens are allowed to rest in peace.

New and unusual storms seem, it is true, to be gathering threateningly on the horizon, but this need not surprise us. The conflict between good and evil will not end until the time, when to the field of mingled wheat and tares the sickle and the torch shall be applied. But the old Church, which has survived so many storms, will also meet the tempests of the future confidently and victoriously when they come.

Will some of these storms bring with them actual persecution? It is possible. Persecution is to-day contemporaneous with us in Mexico and Russia, cruel, sanguinary and appalling. The eloquent Jesuit, Father Joseph Rickaby, says: "If there is one thing clear in the Apocalypse, it is that the sun of human history will set in red, and that the last age of the Church will be like the first, an age of martyrdom."

Let Communism triumph, as it has done in Russia, and let the "world-revolution" come to pass, and the good Father's prophecy will be fulfilled. Who can predict the future? Who could have believed, twenty years ago, that deeds of which we read daily could ever be possible?

However this may be, the Catholic Church is well aware that she must always be prepared to suffer persecution *somewhere* in Christ's kingdom. But she is equally certain that persecution will never destroy her, and she believes that the discords of time will eventually be lost in the harmonies of eternity.

The ocean of religious faith in God, which still encircles all humanity, has, like terrestrial seas, its rising and its refluent tides. For many years its waters have been steadily receding; but I believe the ebb has wellnigh reached its limit, that the tide is turning, and that the flood will once more break upon our shores.

Chapter V

THE TEACHING CHURCH

"Both reason and conscience dictate that, if the Christian religion be true, and if we are held to be so terribly responsible for not accepting it, God must have given an *infallible teacher* in regard to that religion, in order that we may know what it is we are asked to believe."

"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to *teach others also*." St. Paul (2 Timothy ii. 2).

"The mere sharpening of wits, the bare training of the intellect, the naked acquisition of science, while they increase the power for good, likewise increase the power for evil. An intellectual growth will only add to our confusion, unless it is accompanied by a moral growth. I do not know of any source of moral power other than that which comes from religion."

President Coolidge.

BUT life is fleeting. Instead of the fathers shall be the children. The generations of men succeed one another like waves upon the strand, and the achievements of one are often obliterated and replaced, like the successive writings on a palimpsest. When, therefore, Jesus, after His short early life, prepared to "go again unto the Father," what measures did He take to ensure the permanency of the Church which He had founded and the Revelation He had made? As He contemplated His approaching separation from His disciples, it is certain that He was not primarily concerned with the writing of the Gospels and Epistles, or with proofs of their authenticity; for, as we have already seen, He neither wrote a book Himself nor did He commission His disciples to do so. He foresaw that these would be forthcoming at the proper moment and would, until the end of time, instruct, console, and edify the faithful. They would moreover form an essential feature of the Church's growth and a means of intercommunication between the newly-formed churches. Jesus therefore contented Himself with promising to His disciples the coming of the Holy Ghost, to teach them all things and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said to them.* They, in their turn, were to pass this information on to others. Christ's parting command was: "Go ye therefore and *teach all nations*." To Timothy St. Paul wrote: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . *preach the word;*

* John xiv. 26.

be instant in season, out of season . . . exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. . . . The things that thou hast *heard* of me among many witnesses, the same *commit thou to faithful men who shall* be able to teach others also."*

It is clear, therefore, that Christ's Church was to be a *teaching* Church (*Ecclesia docens*), and that its instruction was to be delivered, in the beginning, *orally*.

Not writing, but teaching was the apostles' first task. They taught, before they wrote.

* * * * * *

It is of vital importance, therefore, to know what Jesus commissioned His apostles to teach, and what they did teach. We find this first (in point of time) in the Epistles and subsequently in the Gospels. In these are the doctrines and the words recorded by the evangelists and apostles, and it is incredible that they should have been misrepresented by men who were fresh from association with the Master and were aided by the promised Holy Spirit. Those teachers had no misgivings as to the genuineness of their message.

Before the Gospels had been composed, Paul had already written to the Church of the Galatians: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."†

St. John also in his Epistles is no less emphatic. "Let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you. . . ."‡ "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God."§ ". . . We have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world."‖ "He that believeth not the Son maketh Him a liar."¶

It is unnecessary to quote more. The doctrines taught orally by the apostles to the early Christians or written to them in their Epistles were what the Catholic Church has always cherished as the precious, indispensable and imperishable *depositum veritatis* delivered to it by our Lord and by the inspired eye-witnesses of His life.

It is sometimes urged by hostile critics that Christ pronounced no dogmas in what constitutes in their opinion the essence of Christianity—the Sermon on the Mount. And yet if there can be found a more authoritative and discriminating discourse in all literature than that very Sermon, it would be interesting to see it. It is true, Christ does not there refer to the profounder mysteries

* 2 Tim. iv. 1–3. † Gal. i. 8. ‡ 1 John ii. 24.
§ 1 John iv. 2–3. ‖ 1 John iv. 14. ¶ 1 John v. 10.

of His Revelation, but He certainly proclaimed these later. In the explicit declaration of the Trinity which He gave to His apostles, as the formula of baptism; in the reiterated promulgation of His own divinity and incarnation; in the solemn institution of the Holy Eucharist ("This is my body . . . this is my blood"); and in the establishment of the dogma of penance ("Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them"), we see the origin of, and authority for, these doctrines and sacraments of the Church.

If the Fathers were to return to earth to-day, it is only in the Catholic Church that they would find all the doctrines, sacraments, and customs of the Christianity they knew.

* * * * * *

Yet one often hears such questions as the following: "What is the use of creeds and dogmas in religion? Why have any? In fact, why have a church at all? Why go to any place of worship? Why not 'listen in' at home, or 'worship' in a motor-car, as we speed along, enraptured with God's works? If we do join a religious society, let it be one where everyone can believe as he likes."

But is it conceivable that the Son of God became incarnate on this earth and finally suffered humiliation, agony and cruel death, merely to establish, as His earthly Church, miscellaneous groups of creedless individuals, many of whom doubt His divine claims, wrangle over His commands, and in innumerable cases condescend at most to listen to a sermon, but distinctly *do not worship Him?* If, for a moment, we attempt to realize what that Incarnation really meant—the assumption of our human nature by the Son of God—does it not seem unspeakable audacity for finite pygmies like ourselves to criticize Christ's message, and to pick and choose among the truths which it discloses? These in reality form a series of interwoven doctrines and sacraments, which *necessarily stand or fall together.* It was the master fallacy of Luther and His fellow-revolutionists to think that they could at pleasure keep some of those sacraments and dogmas, and discard the rest. We know the result. What is "Christianity," when deprived of positive doctrines, but a term of vague, uncertain meaning, employed to designate social, charitable associations, whose members gather every week for music and a lecture? As for the modern tendency to speak contemptuously of all dogmas in religion, why not, with equal lack of logic, reject the constitution of a Government, the bye-laws of a club, the platform of a political party, the regulations of an institution, or even the bones of the human body? If we are to be something rather than nothing, *then we must know what that "something" is,* and must be able to give a declaration of, and reason for, the faith that is in us. *To know*

is to define, and definition is dogma ; and dogma is something authoritatively taught.

Dogmas are to religion what constitutions are to governments, bye-laws to corporations, words to thoughts. The dogmas of the Catholic Church are the formulated teachings of the apostles, based upon the Revelation made to them by Christ. The Christian religion is not a debatable system of ethics or philosophy, established by human intelligence. It is a declaration of *divine mysteries*, undiscoverable by human reason, because they transcend its powers. If they had been discoverable, they probably would not have been revealed ; and if, when once delivered, they could be fully comprehended, there would be no need of faith. "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."

To find a solution to the unescapable questions : Whence and whither ? is a craving of our nature, as real and urgent as that of hunger and thirst, and God enables us to solve them by His supernatural disclosures. Not one of the great Christian dogmas could have been discovered by us. Who, for example, could have imagined *à priori* the dogma of the Triune Godhead ? Why should there be in the divine nature a Trinity in Unity ? Libraries of books have been written about it and hundreds of attempts have been made to explain it, from the ponderous *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas to the simple illustration made of it by St. Patrick, when he held aloft a shamrock with its triple leaf and single stem. But it still remains an unfathomable mystery. And why not ? Should we not expect to find that supernatural truths exceed the limits of our natural comprehension ? Can the finite mind ever grasp the infinite ? The fact that much of God's Revelation is beyond our understanding is not a reason for rejecting it, or a proof that it is untrue. This does not mean that our faith must be blind and unreasoning. Far from it. Every Christian should know why he believes what at first may appear incredible. A child accepts its father's statement that it is possible to converse with someone three thousand miles away. The child has not the least idea of how this can be done, yet it believes the fact *because its father says so.* Similarly, the Christian believes that the Revelation of Christ is true on an authority higher than himself. It all resolves itself into the question : "To what shall we apply the test of our reason—to the nature of the dogmas, or to the authority on which they rest ? The Catholic answer is, "To the authority on which they rest." That authority is Jesus Christ and the Church He founded.

* * * * * *

For us the supreme question is, not whether we *comprehend* these mysteries, but *whether Jesus Christ revealed them.* Take, for example,

the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. *Did Christ reveal it?* It is difficult for any unprejudiced reader of the Gospels to deny that He did so. In the first place, He established the *duality* of the Godhead by His unequivocal claim to be the Son of God, who had been sent by the Father. All the passages cited in the second chapter of this volume prove this fact.

Christ's testimony to the third Person of the Holy Trinity is not so voluminous as that to the Father; but it is sufficient. In His memorable farewell discourses* Jesus says: "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Other passages confirm this, such as: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."†

"He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove."‡

"It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."§

"And the Holy Ghost was upon him."‖

"The Holy Ghost said: Separate me Saul and Barnabas,"¶ and, "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us, to lay upon you no further burdens."**

I have already alluded to the Saviour's official proclamation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity in the formula of baptism. This gives the most solemn basis of authority for the dogma which the human mind can conceive. The doctrine of the Triune God is certainly for us an unfathomable mystery, but there is in it nothing self-contradictory. It is incomprehensible, but not contrary to reason. It does not make the absurd statement that $1=3$; it does not say that God is one Nature in three Natures, or that God is one Person in three Persons; but that God is *One Nature in Three Persons.* Finally, God does not ask us to say to Him: "Lord, I understand this," but "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

* * * * * *

And what is true of the doctrine of the Trinity is true of all the rest. One is as credible as another. If we believe the dogma of the

* John xiv–xvii. † Matt. iii, 11. ‡ Matt. iii. 16.
§ Mark xiii. 11. ‖ Luke xi. 25. ¶ Acts xiii. 2.
** Acts xv. 28.

Triune Godhead, why should we hesitate to believe the mystery of the Incarnation or the Eucharist? These divine mysteries are not the only ones that we must face in life. We are surrounded by mysteries. It is the natural order of things. Our scientific discoveries show us daily how little we know of all that lies behind phenomena. Everything fundamental is in the last analysis an enigma. We walk by faith far oftener than we walk by sight, and much of what we hold for certain we can neither explain nor understand. We must believe, from the constitution of our minds, in infinite time and infinite space, but do we comprehend them? Do we understand the velocity of waves of light (moving at the rate of 180,000 miles a second), or the vibrations of interstellar ether, or the origin of life, or the practically infinite number of invisible atoms, or the origin of matter, or the passage from the inorganic to the organic, or the transformation of waves of light and sound into *thought*, as these are transmitted to the brain? Yet the reality of these things must be accepted, at least as working hypotheses. Why, then, do we repudiate the divinely revealed mysteries? The pride and arrogance of man in dealing with infinity are precisely those qualities which Jesus particularly condemned. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and *become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."* "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God *as a little child*, shall in no wise enter therein."

"I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. For so it hath seemed good in Thy sight."† We must enter the Church of Christ upon our knees.

* * * * * *

But it is often claimed that some of the doctrines which the Catholic Church now teaches were unknown to the early Church. It is true that, in the form of officially defined dogmas, they did not then exist. Nevertheless, in embryo and essence they were there. It is certain that, already in the first century, the teaching of the Church was *in substance* what it is to-day. Is it objected that the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation were first proclaimed officially in the fourth century? Well, what of that? From time to time in her eventful history the Church has found it necessary to meet such heresies as Arianism and Nestorianism with *a distinct, ex cathedra definition of what the Creed of the Church is upon those points.* Will anyone, however "Modernist" he may be, dare to maintain that the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation did not exist from the beginning of Christianity, even if not then

* Matt. xviii. 3. † Matt. xi. 25–26.

formally defined? Were not the apostles sent out at the very start to teach and to baptize "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? Does not Paul's benediction to the Church of Corinth* read: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all"? And what was the teaching of the Church from the outset, but that of the divine "*Word*, that was made flesh and dwelt among us" . . . And "the Word was God"?

Cardinal Newman's monumental work on this subject, *The Development of Doctrine*, has made anything more upon that theme superfluous, save perhaps the following brief epitome of his argument: Whatever has been officially declared from time to time by the sovereign Pontiff to be the Church's Faith, *has always existed by implication in the treasury of apostolic truth committed to her care.* There is in the Catholic Church an evolution of doctrinal definition and also a promulgation of truths, which had been sleeping in the *depositum veritatis* until the moment came when, in the providence of God and under the aid and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Vicar of Christ on earth has deemed it necessary to *define* their true significance, in order to invalidate and silence some dogmatic error or some dangerous heresy.

* * * * * *

There is a tendency, however, among non-Catholics to substitute for carefully defined dogmas a hazy form of mentality based on Bible-reading only, with private judgement as the sole interpreter. Nothing else, it is said, is necessary. But in the first place, how much reading of the Bible is now done; and even if the Bible is read, how much of it is understood correctly? Scripture is not self-explanatory. If it were, there would not be so many contradictory interpretations of it. One reader concludes that a text means this, another sees in the same words something very different, a third contradicts both; until we reach at last the chaotic condition now existing in sectarian circles. Who was the teacher of Christian doctrines before the New Testament was written? The Catholic Church. Who was the interpreter of the Gospels and Epistles, when they appeared? The Catholic Church. Who was the selecter, compiler, and preserver through the ages of its sacred Books? The Catholic Church. Who, in the great ecclesiastical Councils, were the prelates who decided on the definition of its dogmas? The representatives of the Catholic Church.

From the first, the Catholic Church has accepted Christ's Revelation without reserve, and preached it without compromise

* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

It believes that morality is inseparable from religion, and teaches both. It is a praying Church, which urges its members to pray, and aids them to do so by its litanies. To the endless varieties of the Protestant sects it opposes the unbroken unity of its discipline and the inflexibility of its creed. Taught in the catechism, its doctrines become the possession of the young and the inheritance of the old.

Hence it looks with horror on a godless education for its children, and seeks to have them religiously instructed. But there is only one Church in Christendom that claims the right to teach religion and morals with divine authority, and there is only one Church that does so. It is the Roman Catholic Church, which dates from the apostles, and whose first bishop was the Primate Peter.

Does anyone object that some of the successors of St. Peter have made mistakes in their definitions of the Church's Faith and moral code? Show me what they are. Frail, imperfect and even sinful individual Popes there have sometimes been, *but they have not been recreant to the Faith, or promoters of false doctrines.*

On the other hand, think of the long array of noble Pontiffs who have occupied the chair of Peter, many of whom were saints and martyrs. To turn one's back upon a Church like this because of minor imperfections in some of its leaders was more than a calamity, it was a crime. What permanent authority or universal guide do those possess who left the Mother Church, four hundred years ago? None. We may be very sure that our Saviour never intended any such uncertain source of teaching, when He said to His apostles: "Preach the Gospel to every creature . . . He that heareth you, heareth me." The spectacle, not only of discordant sects, but of contradictory statements of bishops and clergymen *in the same sect*, is an insult to the Holy Ghost, if He be recognized as their guide. Does the Catholic Church admit no compromise in doctrine? Let us thank God for it, as for the shadow and support of a great rock in a weary land.

The practical question for us is: "*Will we allow Christ's teaching Church* to teach us? Will we accept her decisions as to dogmas, and submit to her authority? As for myself, if I had not finally come to believe in the existence of this infallibly-guided, God-appointed Church, which forms so great a contrast to the ever-growing army of discordant sects, I should never have become a Roman Catholic, for it was precisely this that I was seeking, namely, *authority*, *certainty* and *unity of doctrine*. Where private judgements rule in rivalry, and where there is no authoritative interpretation of dogma and no accepted unity of teaching, there can be no peace for the soul. Were I to lose these now, I should abandon the struggle and go back to the wilderness of anarchy and agnosticism.

Chapter VI

CATHOLIC VERSUS SECULAR EDUCATION

IT is certain that the Founder of Christianity told His apostles to teach; but whom were they to teach? In general, the entire world. The command was universal: "Teach all nations; preach the Gospel to every creature." But, if the paramount task of the Church was its mission-work, it had also the imperative duty of teaching the members of its own household. The thrice repeated words of Christ to Peter are significant: "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs."

But in order that the laity of the Church may be taught, they must be able to hear the teaching. This can usually be accomplished in the case of adults, who live in the vicinity of churches, but the question becomes a much more serious one when it concerns the education of children. In the United States, and in many other so-called Christian countries, State education is compulsory, but *religious education is forbidden in the public schools.* In consequence of this, the vast majority of American boys and girls are to-day receiving in State schools a godless education, and are becoming practically pagans. The average private family has no time and often no capacity for the task of remedying this evil. Moreover many parents, often in the upper walks of life, have themselves no religion and *do not wish to have any form of religion taught their children!* "I don't know anything about God, Christ, immortality and all that bunk," I have had a father say to me; "and I'm going to let my children wait till they are of age before investigating these matters. Then, if they want a religion, let them pick out the one that suits them!" I know also of an American mother who fanatically refuses to have her little daughter taught to pray! Religion seems to such parents a fad or weakness, like spiritualism, astrology, or palmistry, which may be indulged in by their children, later on in life, if they have not learned better. They are fashionable society atheists. It is almost certain that children thus reared will never understand what true Christianity is, as long as they live. About three-fifths of the people of the United States profess no religion whatsoever. The school population there is about twenty-four millions. Of these perhaps three millions receive positive religious instruction; six millions obtain a lamentably insufficient religious training at home or in the Sunday-schools; the other fifteen millions grow up without any. How can we be surprised at the

alarming number of youthful criminals under such conditions? It has been said that if Jesus Christ Himself should to-day attempt to enter a public school to preach His Gospel, He would be refused admission and perhaps arrested.

* * * * * *

One likes to trace great movements, like great rivers, from their sources. The Catholic parish school is not a recent innovation; it is the legitimate descendant of the catechetical school of the early Christian Church. Even the first public schools and colleges of America were not irreligious. Protestants, as well as Catholics, then made Bible reading and some religious instruction obligatory. Our neo-paganism has done away with this. Hence, since the State schools will not teach religion, the only barrier which Catholics can rear against the rising tide of godlessness and irreligious education is the Catholic parochial school, which inculcates and preserves religion. And yet this barrier is being constantly assailed, not only by the enemies of all religion, but by the Protestants themselves. It is a fearful thing to say of a great country that it has no adequate Christian education; yet that is largely true of the United States to-day. For the preaching of sermons and a lesson once a week in Sunday-school, imparted by teachers often totally unfit to give instruction in Christian doctrines, *is not really religious education*, and would not be, even if the churches and Sunday-schools were well-attended, which is notoriously not the case. A State school education may be admirable, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It feeds the mind, but ignores the soul. The Catholic school feeds both. Secular education excludes the spiritual side of man's nature. The Catholic Church resents this mutilation. If the secular school prohibits religious and moral instruction, then the Catholic school must supply the deficiency. Good Catholics are determined that their children shall not be reared as youthful atheists, and hence make serious sacrifices to establish and maintain their own educational institutions, where a religious and ethical training shall be given. I say "serious sacrifices," for, in addition to the great expense involved in doing this, Catholics have also to pay their regular taxes for the public schools, which, however, they do not always use.

Most Catholic schools are monuments of self-denial. Thousands of priests and religious teachers have laboured in them without pay their whole life long, in order that children, instead of growing up like heathen, might be taught something of God, the soul, and moral responsibility. And yet, according to a calculation recently made for the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the number of Catholic undergraduates attending non-Catholic colleges and

universities, in 1924, was 37,931, or 3000 more than the Catholic students in all the Catholic colleges and universities in the United States combined! Moreover, this movement seems to be increasing. "Men and brethren," St. Paul would say, "these things ought not so to be."

* * * * * *

Let us face the situation. The American youth of to-day finds that religious teaching is excluded from the public educational institutions of his country. All the instruction given in them pertains to this world only. The existence of the human soul and its destiny are matters never touched on in the classrooms. The boy or girl must be familiar with the names and mythological history of the Greco-Roman gods, but the name of the Christian God and any allusion to His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, who lived and died to redeem mankind, are conspicuous by their absence. Perceiving the difference between this attitude and that of his parents towards religion, the Catholic boy, if he has been brought up properly, is at first greatly troubled by this change of values. All that he has been taught to consider essential is here regarded as outgrown and untrue. Some of his professors go so far as to ridicule such ideas, if not in so many words, at least by an air of superior knowledge, a shrug of the shoulders, or a meaning smile. The Catholic Church especially is treated as obsolete and ignorant. It is alleged that in many secular universities the influence of some of the professors on their pupils is anti-religious, anti-Christian, anti-moral, and (so far as positive evidence of what they affirm is concerned) unscientific. Prof. James H. Leuba, of Bryn Mawr, is quoted as saying that fifty per cent of our scientists doubt or deny the existence of a personal God and personal immortality. Yet many of these scientists are teachers of American youth, and . . . of Catholic youth!

In a number of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* of 1910 appeared an article by Mr. Harold Bolce, who had made a special study of the kind of lectures then being delivered in more than a hundred American universities and colleges. Among other things he reported that: "In hundreds of classrooms *it is being taught daily* that the Decalogue is no more sacred than a syllabus; that the home as an institution is doomed; that there are no absolute evils; that immorality is simply an act in contradiction to society's standards . . . that the change from one religion to another is like getting a new hat; that moral precepts are passing shibboleths; and that conceptions of right and wrong are as unstable as styles of dress."

The consequences of all this are disastrous. It is an unequal struggle. The youthful student naturally accepts the standpoint of the men *to whom his parents have sent him for instruction.* Accordingly, the atmosphere of intellectual pride and scepticism which

envelopes him gradually dissipates his faith in Christianity, perhaps in the supernatural altogether. He does not deliberately abandon his faith; but he wakes up one morning and finds it gone. He therefore turns to a materialistic, pagan philosophy of life, indifferent alike to his origin and destiny, though well aware that his terrestrial existence may at any moment end.

* * * * * *

In view of these facts, Catholic parents must decide whether they dare to expose their boys and girls to such a risk. What shall it profit their sons and daughters, if they gain the whole world, and lose their souls? It is even possible that the parents themselves may, by their decision, lose their own souls. Their duty in this matter is clearly and uncompromisingly defined by the canon law of the Catholic Church. This says (Can. 1113): "Parents are bound by a most grave obligation to provide to the best of their ability for the *religious and moral*, as well as for the physical and civil education of their children." Still more explicitly it states (Can. 1374): "Catholic children *must not attend non-Catholic*, neutral or mixed schools, that is, such as are also open to non-Catholics." Hence, if it is impossible for parents to provide for the religious and moral education of their children elsewhere, their inexorable duty is to send them to Catholic institutions, where such an education *will* be given them.

In making this momentous decision, it must be confessed, parents encounter many difficulties. The first is usually the opposition made by the children themselves to parochial schools and especially to Catholic colleges. Their ambition is to go to the larger and better-known secular institutions, usually frequented by the children of Protestant, Jewish or Pagan parents, who usually have plenty of money and can afford to surround their sons and daughters with every luxury. The Catholics of the United States are, on the contrary, comparatively poor, and the temptation is very great for such parents to be indifferent to the great issues at stake, and to send their children to the popular secular colleges where the millionaires' boys and girls go. They cherish thus a hope that their own less-favoured offspring may find influential friends among the "best class" of American youth of both sexes. It is hoped also that through companionship with such fellow-students a more advantageous social position and better business opportunities can be obtained. This is an argument which appeals forcibly to many parents, especially to mothers. For, in spite of their boasted spirit of democracy, Americans are greatly influenced by social standing, although their "aristocracy" is chiefly one of money only.

But, although many lukewarm Catholics are willing to sacrifice

the spiritual welfare of their children for the chance of their forming friendships with wealthy and " high-toned " classmates, it is doubtful whether the fawning, parasitic, snobbish spirit, thus engendered, does not more than counterbalance any social or material benefit.

* * * * * *

But perhaps the most potent reason why American children prefer the richer and more popular educational centres, is that the present mania for competitive athletic sports assures a larger field for their enjoyment in those universities, where vast sums of money are expended for gigantic stadiums, colossal gymnasiums, training experts (with a higher salary than any member of the faculty) and many other items, which to a rational mind, unfettered by this craze, appear fantastic, unnecessary and injurious. The " drives " for money, which some of these universities are compelled to make among their alumni, run into figures out of all proportion to the actual needs of the undergraduates, who have never acquired, by work or self-sacrifice, any adequate knowledge of the value of money. Nor do such lavish expenditures, as they see about them and perhaps participate in, tend to make the students better citizens of the republic. Professors of American colleges, themselves inadequately paid, have told me that their spendthrift institutions are now fairly overrun by thousands of young men, who come thither with no serious intention to acquire knowledge, but to have a glorious four years' orgy of conviviality, with a minimum of work; since—owing to the emasculating elective system—they now can choose the line of least resistance, and by an expert juggling with " credits " for work which frequently cannot be classed among intellectual occupations, manage to secure a degree, and graduate with very little to show for their parents' generosity and sacrifice. If the object of education is to enable the student to lead a life of sport and subsequently to acquire wealth, the famous scholars, orators, advocates, and writers of the past were educated on the wrong principle. We are working on a lower level. What does Plato constantly reiterate but that the object of the State is the production of *men*, not of money? There is something better than getting *on* in the world, and that is—getting *above* it.

A professor in an American university recently said to me: " Our undergraduates are very superficially educated; most of them are not worth their salt. They care for little but sport and its concomitants. Their athletic champions are to them demigods. No college administration would dare to drop or expel one of the heroes of the football team, however low his grade of scholarship. It is a question of brawn not brains. The only students who amount to anything from an educational point of view are the few who

subsequently take post-graduate courses. They turn their brains to some account and take life seriously. The rest are mostly gilded calves, or calves without the gilding."

"Why do you admit such droves of them?" I asked him; "why do you not prefer to raise the standard of admission high enough to exclude the would-be loafers?"

"Because," he answered, "all our colleges and universities wish to have large classes and to surpass in this respect their rivals. Such is the lure of sport and snobbery, that overwhelming numbers of applicants clamour now for admission at the college gates. Dormitories can hardly be built fast enough to lodge them!

"Columbia University's number of students last year was more than 37,000! The small secular college of fifty years ago, with practically no electives, and with a limited curriculum, which had been approved and tested by a century or two of experience and was free from innumerable modern superfluities, that sort of small secular college, I say, is a thing of the past; the more's the pity."

According to Prof. Corwin of Yale (in *Yale Alumni Weekly*, April 16, 1926): "It seems to be generally acknowledged by those competent to judge, that the American boy is one or two years behind his Western European contemporary in solid scholastic achievement."

Far worse indictments of American secular education could be cited, if it were necessary. There can, however, be no doubt that most of our great institutions of learning, upon which such enormous sums of money are expended, are not "delivering the goods," and that the principal causes for what another American University professor calls their "educational anarchy," are *too many subjects of study*, *too much devotion to competitive sport* and *too little interest in high ideals*, and in literary, linguistic, historical, and philosophical pursuits, which ought to make the student a broadly cultured man, if he improved his opportunities. But with the smattering of studies which he now too often acquires he can "put his roots down nowhere."

* * * * * *

The preparatory schools must bear their share of blame in this unsatisfactory condition of affairs. A professor of foreign languages (an American) tells me that he has to spend an immense amount of time, which ought to be devoted to higher work, in teaching poorly prepared Freshmen spelling, syntax, and grammar, because they lack the indispensable fundamentals of any language, even their own! He maintains also that classical and historical allusions are not generally understood. These youths have apparently motored or footballed themselves out of the habit of reading such literature.

References to religious and Biblical subjects show that in this respect their minds are a blank. Professors who lecture to college classes say that they are obliged to use simple words in order to be understood. This is largely due to the fact that a proper training in English language and literature has been crowded out of the school curriculum by relatively unimportant subjects.

The study of the classical languages has been attacked by the Utilitarian school, as being of no practical value. Greek has been discarded from the curriculum of many institutions; Latin may follow it, although it is hardly conceivable that any university would contribute thus to the end of modern culture. Aside from its immense value as a teacher of linguistic form, the study of ancient literature is of enormous benefit. It will be said that we have translations of the classics. But there is no comparison in the effect which the two produce upon the mind. Ideas which one himself extracts from the works of the great authors of Greece and Rome are, as compared with their presentation in translations, like pure gems contrasted with paste imitations, or, as Schopenhauer said, "like coffee, compared with chicory."

History also now plays a minor rôle in education. In this feverish modern life the present constantly tends to exclude the past. We have no time to look backward. The languages, history, and traditions, which have made us intellectually what we are, are now disparaged. If we can name the counties of New York, why bother about the provinces of the Roman empire? Everything, even education, must be speeded up and modernized. Time is money. To save a little of it, we eliminate letters from our immemorial words, and write "through" "thru," thus gaining a few seconds.

There is also a tendency to make the acquisition of knowledge as easy as possible.

"Sit down and learn a thing by heart?
  Good heavens! that is not the style;
The *teacher* must the facts impart,
  And keep things pleasant all the while.

And Algy finds the Latin tongue
  A little trying for his brain.
'He is not strong'; 'He is too young';
  You know the same old stale refrain.

To us our parents did not yearn
  An easy tempting path to show;
We had our lessons then to *learn*,
  But that was eighty years ago!"

* * * * * *

The question presents itself: Are Catholic universities and colleges as reprehensible in these respects as the secular? I do not think they are. The causes of educational deterioration, due to the deification of Sport as compared to Scholarship, are much less operative in Catholic institutions; first, because these are not so handicapped by huge numbers of students; secondly, because they are not burdened with such a bewildering variety in their curricula; thirdly, because the craze for sport and society is not so predominant; fourthly, because co-education is there restricted, if not tabooed; and lastly, because the religious, historical, and philosophical elements of the Catholic curriculum keep the standard of scholarship and the intellectual training of the students always high.

The Catholic professor does not forget, for example, that the ideas of Christianity cannot be separated from the classical languages. Most of the New Testament was originally written in Greek. Greek and Latin were the languages used by the Church Fathers; and practically all the manuscripts of the Gospel and the documents of the Church, throughout the ages, have been written in those tongues. The Sovereign Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church issues his Encyclicals in Latin. Latin is also the universal language of the priests and prelates of the Church to-day, and in its sonorous sweetness every Mass is said in millions of Catholic churches daily. Accordingly these grand avenues of culture and tradition are laid open to the Catholic student, as to none other in the world.

As for the "difficulties" objected to by the seekers after "the line of least resistance" and by their easygoing parents, it should be remembered that difficulties *are there to be overcome*, that there is no royal road to knowledge, and that there should be none. Mental discipline and the victory over obstacles are precisely what is needed for the formation of strong, manly characters. A Russian writer has said: "An easy school is a crime against society."

Christianity and classical antiquity agree in regarding this life as a conflict, where character is formed and tested by meeting trials and subduing them.

It is true, religious, philosophical and moral training alone is not sufficient to produce a Christian character; but it is a powerful aid to forming one, and the *spiritual atmosphere* which those elevated studies create, together with the fact that most of the teachers are not only well-educated specialists, but devout Christian priests or nuns, gives a religious, reverential, and serious character to the whole college life.

* * * * * *

As regards the sport mania, Catholic colleges and universities, while encouraging athletic sports and even intercollegiate contests, sometimes

to a reprehensible extent, do not, as a rule, believe in carrying the cult of *competitive sport* to such a fanatical degree that hundreds of thousands of dollars can be collected for a stadium or a covered track for winter-running, but nothing for the library! They are not in favour of a life of four years under such surroundings, for this often means not only a waste of time, but a positive danger to the formation of a self-controlled, well-balanced, and industrious character. It must be remembered that the old-fashioned but well-equipped gymnasium of forty years ago afforded all the opportunities for health-promoting exercise that any young man *needed*. Now, however, the dumb-bells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, and pullies are, if not thrown to the scrap-heap, pushed into a corner. All the interest centres in the sports arena, yet those who really use their muscles there are very few. Some twenty-five champions—many of them overtrained—in every university do the real work ; but the vast majority of the collegians stand about watching them, smoking cigarettes, cheering their favourites and howling at their opponents. And it is for this that *the enormous stadiums are built, the millions of dollars spent and the unwilling faculties dragooned* into subservience to the mob! To this must be added the commercialization of the intercollegiate games, their demoralizing publicity, the " big " gate-money,* the vociferous, vulgar crowds, the betting, the great number of the loafing " unemployed," the sporting pages of the newspapers—in short, the old Pagan spirit of *panem et circenses* which now prevails throughout the land. Of the vanity engendered by this journalistic notoriety by the display of the athletes' pictures and by the adoration of the populace, it is not necessary to speak. And what is true of university and college athletic sports is reproduced upon a smaller scale in the fashionable secular preparatory schools ; for the graduates of these institutions have become such adepts in the glorification of athletes, that they enter college fully qualified at least to carry on the frenzied yells and cat-calls which spur the combatants to victory.

The dangers—physical, mental, and moral—attending the competitive collegiate and non-collegiate contests of the present day are a hundred times increased, when the contestants are *young women*. In proof of this, I can only refer to the admirable article in *Harper's Magazine* of July, 1929, entitled " Women and the Sport Business."

The Faculties of the secular universities are as timid as the parents. Both capitulate to domineering Youth. The colleges are afraid to

* The *Cosmopolitan* is authority for the statement that Yale University had gross receipts from football last year of more than a million dollars, and that her net profit exceed $543,000. Harvard netted $420,787 from her football achievements ; Princeton nearly $300,000 ; Michigan University more than $400,000. The gross receipts for all the competing colleges were over $50,000,000.

discourage these excesses, for fear of losing students; and the underpaid professors yell with the other onlookers, because they fear unpopularity if they do otherwise. And the Alumni? They contribute millions for sport and . . . privately pass around the hat to collect a decent salary for the professors, some of whom cannot afford to employ a servant. It may perhaps be said that, if Catholic universities and colleges had more money and more students, they would be equally extravagant and sport-ridden; but I believe their Boards of Administration would never consent to it. What can even indulgent parents and "hard-headed" business men think of the astounding figures given in the preceding footnote? If I were alone in these opinions, they might be curtly dismissed as the conservative grumbling of an octogenarian. But mine is not a voice crying in the wilderness. There is a growing consensus of opinion antagonistic to this waste of time and money.

The late President Taft, for example, who took a lively interest in reasonably conducted sport and was a loyal son of his university, recently raised his voice in warning against this "misconception of the purpose of education." He said among other things: "To-day, *the emphasis in college life is radically and fundamentally wrong.* Scholarship has been pushed aside and dwarfed by the super-importance that has been given to athletics . . . Most of our great universities and colleges to-day have professional athletic business managers, trained publicity agents, high-priced coaches and, I am told, million-dollar seasons. There is a definite professional side to all this that is not in keeping with educational ideals and purposes. The stadium overshadows the classroom."

When we reflect that these words were spoken by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, we see that the evil here described is not a whimsical theory, but a fact of the greatest importance.

* * * * * *

Catholic parents and Catholic children, do not think for a moment that the quality and quantity of instruction given in your institutions are inferior to those of the most famous secular universities. If that is your idea of them, you make a grave mistake. Yours is the right, as Catholics, to be proud of them, and yours the privilege to make use of them. Never apologize for them. They need no apology. Send for their catalogues and examine their curricula. Inform yourselves about the professors and teachers of such institutions, the moral and religious influence there exerted, the results achieved and the men and women they have sent out into the world. The State has the right to subject every parochial school or Catholic college to an examination as to its efficiency in meeting the required standard;

but Catholic institutions have nothing to fear from the severest legitimate tests. Perhaps a greater number and variety of subjects may be offered to students in secular colleges, but in such far-flung schedules lurks a deadly peril. So wide a field of knowledge can often be acquired only at the expense of depth. *Qui trop embrasse, ne retient rien.*

It should be borne in mind that, in addition to at least as thorough instruction in the sciences, languages, mathematics, history, and all the branches generally included in a classical and scientific curriculum, students in Catholic colleges enjoy the privilege of a *special education* in philosophy, theology, ethics, and logic, such as is not to be obtained for love or money in the secular colleges. This is not a sterile memorizing of the catechism, but a magnificent training of the mind on the loftiest themes,which will for ever render those thus favoured superior in spirituality and mentality to millions of their contemporaries of the godless colleges. Not to supply this to the youthful student is a terrible mistake ; for it is unnecessary to emphasize the fact that an exclusively secular education *may* make him only a clever rascal. Divorced from moral and religious training, *mere* intellectual acquisition may be worse for society than illiteracy.

As for the senseless charge that Catholic religious training can ever make men unpatriotic, that has been too thoroughly disproved by facts and recently by scores of able writers, to require here an additional word.

* * * * * *

In conclusion, I believe that, entirely apart from religious considerations, a young man or woman can receive in a Catholic university or college a better education and a broader, higher culture than in our sport-ruled, irreligious institutions. The instructors in Catholic universities are not scientific sneerers at the supernatural, but devout believers in God, as the Creator and Supreme Intelligence of the Universe, and in the incarnation of Jesus Christ His Son. Like the greatest minds of the past and many of the greatest minds of the present, these Catholic professors say with Kepler that, in their scientific researches, they " think God's thoughts after Him." In a Catholic university the student is regarded primarily, not as a man who may ignore all moral restraints because of his relation to some bestial ancestor, but as a God-created and immortal soul with boundless possibilities. He is urged to be spiritually reverent, intellectually humble and physically pure. He is taught that religion is the supreme duty and privilege of man, and that his Church—which is no mushroom growth, but a spiritual power deeply rooted in the past—is something to command his homage, fealty and love.

Thus trained, the Catholic student possesses a distinct advantage

over others, in that he has a loftier ideal to follow than the acquisition of money or the pursuit of pleasure. His special task is to develop a noble, God-fearing character—the only thing that he can take with him from this world to the next.

Thus educated and inspired, he graduates with his relationship to God and to his Church unbroken, because it is founded upon study and conviction. This will remain with him through life and comfort him in death, for he can always give a good and sufficient reason for the faith that is in him.

Chapter VII

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

"Speak, History! Who are life's victors? Unroll thy long annals, and say:
Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won the success of a day?
The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans, who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges, or Socrates? Pilate, or Christ?"

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY.

CHRISTIANS may well be proud of what the Church has accomplished against stupendous odds. If we are looking for a miracle, here is one of the first order. The rapidity with which the Christian religion spread through the Greco-Roman world is inexplicable by merely natural causes.

The apostles began to preach Christ and Him crucified only a few months after the death of their Master, that is about the year 33. The Acts of the Apostles relates their first successes. Three thousand were converted in Jerusalem soon after the Day of Pentecost, and among these were the representatives of many different nations.* Shortly after, five thousand more were added to the number of those who believed.† Less than thirty years later, the Gospel had been preached to twenty different peoples; churches had been established in a chain of cities bordering on the Mediterranean, among them Antioch, Damascus, Athens, Tarsus, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, Colosse, Thessalonica, and Rome itself. The Church Father, Tertullian (160–240), in one of his eloquent defences of Christianity, thus addressed the Roman magistrates: "We are only children of yesterday, but already we abound everywhere, in your islands, your cities, your palaces, your castles, your villages, your councils, your camps, your tribes, in the Senate and in the public squares. *We leave you . . . only your temples!* ‡

Pliny the Younger, then Governor of Bithynia in Northern Asia Minor, only thirty years after the Crucifixion, wrote to the emperor Trajan: "This superstition has invaded not only our cities, but our villages and country districts . . . The pagan temples are abandoned, the sacrifices interrupted, and the victims find but few purchasers."§ The emperor Julian's desperate attempt to revive

* Acts iii. 41. † Acts iv. 4.
‡ *Apol.*, Chap. XXXVII. § Book X, Ep. 97.

the pagan religion and to make the old gods live again, proved a complete failure. Pan and all the other mythological deities were dead, beyond the possibility of resurrection.

The progress of Christianity in the early centuries has been compared to the tidal wave of Mohammedan conquest which, in the seventh century, swept around the Mediterranean through Arabia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Northern Africa, and Spain; but this immense achievement was largely a triumph of the sword. That of Christianity was a conquest of the spirit. Pascal has well said: "Jesus Christ and Mohammed adopted methods so unlike each other that, since Mohammed succeeded, Christ must have failed and Christianity must have perished, had it not been upheld by a force entirely divine." Renan himself, in his *Marcus Aurelius and the End of the Ancient World*, says: "Before the year 150, the prediction of Jesus had been realized. The grain of mustard seed had become a tree, which had begun to cover the earth." Renan, it is true, refused to see in this stupendous growth divine assistance; but how is it possible otherwise adequately to explain it?

An eloquent passage from M. de Champagny is worth recalling: "One fact remains incontestable, namely, that a doctrine, unknown to anyone at the time of Augustus, had, *forty years later*, in the reign of Nero, *thousands of disciples*, and four hundred years later was mistress of the world! I would like to have someone explain to me what had taken place in that first brief interval of twoscore years and how this doctrine, originating in an obscure land and among illiterate men, had *from the very first* a positive, well-defined, and universal character. . . . How had it found an entrance into all those cultivated, splendid cities, and, although so contrary to the ideas, interests, and passions of the age, had it speedily found so many adherents? A human explanation of all this has never been given. Someone should solve for us once the mystery of the origin and propagation of Christianity. The conversion of the human race, begun by a dozen men of the people and *accomplished merely by the power of preaching* . . . remains one of the most inexplicable marvels which history records."*

And Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire affirms that "The propagation of the Christian faith throughout the Greco-Roman world presents itself in the annals of humanity with an incomparable and truly miraculous grandeur."†

* * * * * *

In order to account for the sudden and amazing spread of primitive Christianity, it is sometimes claimed that the Pagans were

* *Les Césars.* † *Journal des savants*, March, 1864, p. 185.

disgusted with the old mythology and hence received this new religion gladly; but the story of the Cross must have seemed to them only a new form of the discarded myths. To some of them it was a dispute about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul declared alive.* The novel doctrine of a divine Jew, crucified and risen from the dead—not in the distant ages of the past, but as it were yesterday, last month, last year—must have appeared to the practical Romans an absurdity, to the scoffing Greeks a jest, and to the monotheistic Jews a blasphemy. And yet, with this strange story as their only weapon, those humble Galileans fearlessly advanced to conquer a derisive world. They purposed even to dethrone Olympian Jove and to substitute for him the crucified son of a carpenter! Was there ever such audacity and folly? No wonder the Athenians laughed contemptuously when Paul spoke to them of the resurrection of the dead. No wonder that the Roman governor Festus exclaimed: "Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad." In fact, Paul himself declared that this doctrine was "to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness."†

But nothing could hinder either Paul or his associates from obeying the command of Christ to preach His Gospel everywhere. Not furtively nor timidly, but in crowded synagogues, before magistrates, and in the city streets and squares of Asia Minor, Greece, Illyria, Macedonia, Egypt, Italy, and the islands of the Mediterranean. There was no possiblity of misunderstanding them. The records of many trials of the Christian martyrs show with documentary exactness the faith for which they were ready to die, and did die. Nor was there any doubt of their sincerity. *If Jesus did not really rise from the dead and appear to them, as described in the Gospels, how can we conceive that these apostles, after having seen their Master crucified and buried, should not for ever more have regarded Him as an impostor?* And is it within the bounds of credibility that those simple peasants should *invent* such a story as that of the Resurrection and suffer and die for maintaining it, if they were all the time aware that it was a lie, and that Christ Himself had deceived even them?

* * * * * *

Rome could at first have crushed those few itinerant preachers by a word. In fact, it soon attempted to do so. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans about the year 58, which shows that many Christians were already there. Nero's persecution began in the year 64, and by 67 at the latest both Peter and Paul had been put to death. But in the thirty odd years which had elapsed since the Crucifixion much seed had been sown, and it had germinated. It was too late to annihilate it. Christianity was on the march.

* Acts xxv. 19. † 1 Cor. i. 23.

Again I ask, how can we account, by human means only, for the fact that thousands of people, who had never seen Jesus in the flesh, believed in His divinity on hearing the apostles tell the story of His life, death, and resurrection, and believed it with such devotion and enthusiasm as to suffer torture and to die for Christ?

In this the apostles were God's agents; but, humanly speaking, what unpromising agents they were! They were mostly Galilean fishermen or labourers, illiterate and probably inelegant in speech. With the exception of Paul, they did not in the least resemble the learned Rabbis and cultivated Hebrews of Alexandria, who were not only versed in their own Law, but read and spoke Greek fluently and were well acquainted with Greco-Roman literature and philosophy. How can we, then, account for it, by purely natural means, that men like these could teach successfully that new religion with its incomprehensible dogmas and rigid code of morals? They must have seemed to be social revolutionaries. As opposed to the prevailing polytheism, they taught the worship of one God; in place of sensuality, purity; instead of pride, humility; instead of luxury, poverty; instead of selfishness, charity; instead of slavery, brotherly love! The following was the standard, set for them by Christ: "This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I have loved you." "Love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you." "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done this unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Consider also the scene of their activity. The world, into which this handful of fishermen and peasants came to preach the Gospel, was the vast Roman Empire. It had already many religions, which were protected by the State as national institutions. In fact, at that time there was hardly a single act of civil or political life that was not accompanied by some religious ceremony. Moreover, all these cults were dominated by innumerable priests, who gained a livelihood from their office. Hundreds of thousands of cattle-dealers supplied the animals needed for the sacrifices. Numerous handicrafts manufactured for the temples and the people numberless gold and silver ornaments, statues, shrines, and little figures of the gods; and these craftsmen, as the incident of Paul in Ephesus proves, were firmly entrenched in trade and popular favour.

Moreover, the pagan world then swarmed with Asian superstitions, of which Christianity was at first supposed to be one, but with which it soon came into violent contact. Yet, on the other hand, that epoch was at the same time a highly intellectual and sceptical one, and not disposed to be imposed upon. The splendour of the Augustan age had passed, but its afterglow and inspiration still remained. Augustus, Virgil, Horace, Lucretius, Ovid, and other literary stars of the first brilliancy had indeed disappeared, but Seneca,

Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, and many famous rhetoricians and philosophers were speedily to replace them. The Stoics and the Epicureans also had their rival schools and numbered many followers. It might have been expected that from this class, at least, the Christians would encounter no resistance; for most of the educated Greeks and Romans of that time were incredulous of everything pertaining to the gods and hence were indulgently indifferent to all religions. There was, however, one exception. Under some emperors the stiff-necked and exclusive Jews were hated. Tiberius, during whose reign Christ had been crucified, banished four thousand Jews from Rome, most of whom perished miserably in Sardinia. The others were ordered to leave the city or abjure their faith.* A few years later, Claudius also expelled several thousands more. Yet it was precisely a member of this detested race whom the apostles presented to humanity as the Son of God!

* * * * * *

Of course, the apostolic mission was bound to encounter persecution sooner or later. It came almost immediately and was violent and persistent. It began, as was natural, in Jerusalem, and the Jews themselves were its originators. Stephen was the first martyr, and on that occasion the youthful Saul of Tarsus watched the maddened Pharisees crush out that young life with stones, and meanwhile kept the clothing of the lapidators. We also read, in the Acts, of his own subsequent hatred of the followers of Jesus. Who could have then supposed that he would soon become the foremost missionary of the Christian Church, the glorious Apostle to the Gentiles?

The reason for the Jewish hatred of Christianity is easily comprehensible. It accused them of having crucified their own Messiah. Nothing more horrible could be conceived by them, and to convict them of such a crime was blasphemy. But there was also a political motive for their persecution. Never had the fire of Hebrew nationalism burned so fiercely as at that moment. Other nations, when conquered by Rome, accepted the inevitable with calmness. Judæa never did. She showed a sullen submission to Cæsar, but always waited for a leader and a chance to rise, and so at last went madly to her doom. The Jews had expected the Messiah to be such a liberator. Hence we can comprehend their fury against Jesus, who had said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," and "My kingdom is not of this world." Great numbers of the Jews had emigrated to all parts of the world, rather than live in Palestine under the Roman yoke; and now to them those wonderful Evan-

* Tacitus, *Annals*, II, 85.

gelists went forth at once and told them that their Messiah had come and had been crucified by the High Priests and people in the city of David! From the Acts of the Apostles we learn that they boldly entered the synagogues and preached even there the Gospel of Christ crucified, arguing with their compatriots out of their own Scriptures; then, when they had gained a foothold in the town, they passed out of the synagogues to address the Gentiles.

* * * * * *

To us who have our faith supported by the prestige of a religion which eliminated all those pagan cults and overran the world, this task may seem an easy one. But from the first those heralds of the Gospel encountered every sort of raillery, abuse, imprisonment, scourging, and finally death. Paul's life, as given us by his companion Luke, was a constant series of incredible hardships. Listen to his own words: "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen; in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things which come upon me daily —the care of all the churches."

Are we, like the Rationalists, to attribute the marvellous conversion and this magnificent career of St. Paul to a "sunstroke"?

James also, the first bishop of Jerusalem, is said to have been hurled from one of the towers of the Temple, and then, as he still breathed, to have been dispatched with a mallet; Paul was beheaded; Andrew and Peter crucified; Bartholomew was flayed alive; John was tortured with boiling oil and banished to the island of Patmos. Their successors—all of them unarmed, patient, and forgiving—died in their turn for the same truth. The first great persecution was that of Nero, in 64, and the allusion of Tacitus to the number of the martyrs and their horrible sufferings has been already quoted.*

The persecution under Domitian was also terrible, and even worse that under Decius in the year 249. The last, that of Diocletian (303), was the worst of all. Its horrors extended over about ten years. The historian, Eusebius, an eye-witness, says that when the persecutors were tired of the usual forms of bloodshed, they invented new ones. In one case they put out the right eyes of the Christians,

* *Annals*, XV. 44.

cut the tendons of the left legs, and sent them thus, lame and half-blind, to the mines, there to be worked, starved, and flogged nearly to death.

The implacable enemy of Christianity, Celsus, in the year 178, speaks of the Christians as being hunted down everywhere, like vagabonds who must be killed. He writes of them in a tone of insolent triumph: "If two or three of you still exist, wandering about and hiding in caves, you will be ferreted out and dragged to execution." Parenthetically, however, let us note the fact that one of the questions which Celsus sneeringly put to the Christians was: "How can you think it possible that God was ever born of a woman?" The inquiry proves that his victims claimed for Christ divine incarnation by the Virgin Mary.

The first twenty-two Popes were put to death, and the number of Christian martyrs is estimated at three millions. For three centuries the Christians had, at intervals, to struggle against prison, exile, confiscation of property, torture, and death. "The Colosseum, like an immense cup, overflowed with Christian blood." According to St. Augustine, the motto of the early followers of Christ was: "Conquer through suffering." What wonder that the Romans degenerated under this hideous code of conduct and that their cruelty became manifest in their public and private life? It was a time when, not the pen, but the poignard was more powerful than the sword, and poison was the last resort of princes.

It is a proof of the need of something besides an army, education, and refined manners to maintain a civilization from deteriorating into barbarism. The possibility of a complete divorce of intellectuality from morality is illustrated by the conduct of many cultured Romans, who wrote beautiful verses and exquisite reflections on human brotherhood, yet who read or uttered those elevated sentiments in the pauses between the sanguinary scenes of the arena, and perhaps five minutes later turned down their thumbs as a signal that the conquering gladiator might kill his wounded and defeated foe.

Enough has never been said of the contrast between the courage of the Christians and the cowardice and cruelty of the pagans who tortured and destroyed them. For more than four hundred years, in all the amphitheatres of the empire, often day after day and week after week, thousands of inhuman patricians and proletarians watched eagerly from coigns of security the death-agonies of gladiators who were compelled to kill one another, or of Christians, runaway slaves, captives or criminals who were torn to pieces and devoured by wild beasts.

The only really fearless ones were the Christians. They did not tremble. On the contrary, instead of saluting the emperor, as the

gladiators did, with the customary phrase: *Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutamus*, they dared to look him calmly in the face and utter the words: *Ave Cæsar, morituri te judicabimus*, for they believed that in the coming world their rôles would be reversed, and that they would be the judges. Yet these heroic victims were defenceless, sustained alone by their unfaltering faith and hope. The gladiators, however, were trained athletes and were usually well armed. They had indeed the courage of the desperate, for they had been commanded to fight to the last, and knew that they must all be "butchered to make a Roman holiday."

But why did they not, like heroes, sell their lives dearly, rise and make their butchers play the part of victims in this spectacle? Why did they not, *en masse*, scale the low barrier, rush into the imperial box, hurl Cæsar and his parasites and all the other cruel cowards, who so enjoyed the sight of blood and death, down into the arena, and give that mass of pampered flesh to the lions and tigers?

It is inexplicable how they could submit for centuries to be thus massacred and actually to be trained in advance to fall in death, when fall they must, *with studied grace*, and to breathe their last amid the applause or hisses of eighty thousand bloodthirsty poltroons! The insurrection of Spartacus was indeed an exception; but he and his companions, ere they made their escape, should have wreaked their vengeance on their would-be murderers.

Recall by contrast the death of the venerable St. Ignatius here in the year 107. Kneeling down upon the sand of the arena, he prayed to God, and said: "I am the wheat of the Lord. Let me, therefore, be ground by the teeth of lions, that I may become the bread of Christ!"

* * * * * *

The Pagans themselves admired the sublime courage and devotion of these martyrs, but they could not understand it. "They comprehended," says the Abbé Picard, "their gladiators shouting in the Colosseum in front of the imperial box: '*O Cæsar, morituri te salutamus*,' but those hymns to Christ, that last farewell to their supreme and invisible Chief, that calmness in the face of death, that rendezvous so confidently given beyond the confines of the tomb . . . all that confounded ancient paganism." Many of these victims were Greeks and Romans, like their persecutors, yet they had adopted this religion which demanded a complete reformation of their life, and they died, crying, "we, the descendants of Themistocles and Alcibiades, of Fabius and the Scipios, believe in Jesus Christ!" Yet, in the providence of God, this horrible persecution may have

actually promoted the progress of Christianity. It is possible that the Christians would have remained contemptuously disregarded by the Romans, if Nero had not made them scapegoats for his own atrocious crime. His cruelty drew attention to them, and the best of the Romans, who secretly detested the tyrant, were thereby moved to pity for his victims, if for no other reason than to have another cause for cursing the monster of the Palatine.

* * * * * *

It is certain that the Christians did not deserve the treatment meted out to them in the first three centuries. It is impossible to prove that they made any attempt whatever to change the governments under which they suffered. In a country seething with rebellion Christ had preached submission to Cæsar. His followers obeyed the two precepts of their Master: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," and "Love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Theirs was the law of love, and, in the end, that love proved stronger than the might of Rome. There were times in the history of the Cæsars when they might have risen to avenge themselves and better their condition. But they did not do so. From Nero to Constantine many conspiracies were formed and many emperors murdered. But the Christians took no part in them. Tertullian describes them as praying in their hiding-places for the tyrant who was persecuting them, and asking God to grant him "a long life, a tranquil reign, a united family, victorious armies, a faithful Senate, an obedient people, and a world at peace!" And this testimony of Tertullian is confirmed by all the Christian literature of that time and by the treatises of the apologists, the letters of bishops and the judicial documents in the trials of martyrs.

Pliny also wrote from Bithynia to the emperor Trajan that he could discover no crimes among them. Their meetings, he said, though held in secret and before daybreak, are completely innocent and confined to taking a simple meal in common and to singing hymns to Christ as God, and binding themselves by an oath to commit neither theft, robbery, cheating, adultery, breach of trust or any other crime.

What, then, was the cause of the persecutions that raged against them for practically three hundred years? It is not difficult to explain. In the first place, the other religions of the empire were fundamentally polytheistic, and hence they could blend and possibly identify, under different names, their various deities. Not so the strictly monotheistic religion of the Christians. To them the pagan gods were demons, and their statues idols. This attitude exasperated the populace especially. Since the Christians would not favour this

international theocracy, it was thought that they deserved to have no toleration shown them.

It was by making mutual concessions that all the different cults in Rome managed to live together amicably. But the Christians, as well as the Jews with whom they were at first confounded, would make no compromises. "The gods of the heathen are idols," they maintained, and would have nothing to do with them. Hence they became obnoxious to the populace and to all other religionists. The Christians were not blamed for introducing a new god into Rome. Nothing was more common than such introductions. What made them hated was their refusal to bring their deity into the universal pantheon. Even many Roman statesmen and scholars felt instinctively that Christianity was a kind of mysterious, internal disease, which was eating away the heart of the social structure of antiquity.* Pliny, for example, was one of the most intelligent and upright Romans of his day, yet he believed that Christians who refused to obey the law regarding offering incense to the emperor should be punished. Tacitus also thought it to be the first duty of the State to crush out both Judaism and Christianity—"deadly offshoots from the same trunk." Some of the best and most humane of the emperors, like Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, allowed Christians to be put to death, no doubt from a sense of duty to the State. For it is an irrefutable fact that the most upright and kind-hearted of men in private life may in their public functions, from religious or patriotic motives, cause deeds of cruel severity to be committed. Equally true is the fact that men of depraved and bloodthirsty character may in their family life be exemplary husbands and fathers. A notable instance of this is Marat, one of the vilest and most sanguinary monsters of the French Revolution, who was finally stabbed to death in his bath by Charlotte Corday. He was the author of a book. What was it? We naturally imagine it must have been something sadistic and atrocious. Not at all. The title of this literary production of Marat was *Un Roman de Cœur!*

* * * * * *

Another and a still more powerful reason for the persecution of the Christians was their alleged crime of lèse-majesté. In the last analysis, Cæsar was more feared than Jupiter; and Cæsar, as the Head of the State, was in a very real sense the Head of the State-religion. This became a source of the utmost danger, when the Romans began to deify their emperors. No one believed much in this apotheosis, but it was considered a patriotic duty for every citizen to burn a few grains of incense before the statue of the

* Renan, *Les Evangiles*, p. 482.

sovereign, which always stood in the tribunals of the proconsul and other public places. It was before these statues that those suspected of being Christians were brought and requested to render this slight homage to the deified Cæsar. The Romans, even though they smiled contemptuously in doing so, complied with the law; but for Christians to deny belief in the imperial divinity was something different and easily became a crime against the State.

As a rule, they refused to pay this homage. It was a noble act of fidelity to Christ, but it was one which the pagans could not understand. They thought that the Christians were obstinate fanatics or disloyal subjects, and rarely showed them any mercy.

What made this system of examination worse, was the practice of secret denunciations which prevailed. This was the curse of ancient Rome. Informers, who received a part of the confiscated property of their victims, swarmed in the capital during the imperial regime, and no one, rich or poor, high or low, freedman or slave, was safe from calumny, arrest, confiscation, torture, banishment, or death. This seems almost incredible, *yet such a system is actually in operation to-day* in certain countries of Europe, where men are arrested and imprisoned, fined and banished without a public trial, without knowing of what they are accused, and without having a chance to defend themselves; and this is sometimes caused by secret denunciation or anonymous letters. If we think that the weapons of espionage and secret accusation are never used even in the United States of America, it is because we forget some phases of the war-mania in 1917 and certain acts connected with the enforcement of Prohibition at the present time.

* * * * * *

A third, even if a minor cause of the popular hatred of the Christians was their attitude towards the butchery of men and beasts in the gladiatorial combats, notably those of the Colosseum. It is hard for us to imagine, even in our own age of sport-mania, what a prominent part of pagan life was occupied with popular amusements, especially with the gladiatorial games and the circus. Even under Marcus Aurelius, 135 days in the year were given up to them! During the rest of the time, men lived either on the memory of past combats and races, or on the anticipation of coming ones. These sanguinary spectacles were schools of cruelty. They accustomed the people to the sight of torture, blood, and homicide, and when the masses have once acquired the habit of "lapping blood," it is difficult to wean them from it. If this were not the case, how could it come to pass that, even in the times of the Antonines, it was nothing unusual for a father to have his infant child exposed before his door, to die of cold and hunger, if he did not wish to rear it? This custom

lasted till the time of Constantine without exciting indignation, and Seneca himself does not seem to have been astonished at it!*

The Christians, however, regarded these inhuman butcheries with horror and naturally avoided them. But this abstention from them meant disapproval, and the Roman populace resented it. Everyone will remember how these gladiatorial contests ended. The monk Telemachus, shocked at those scenes of cruelty and carnage, rushed into the arena, restrained the conqueror's uplifted arm and begged not only him, but the spectators also to renounce such deeds for ever. He was immediately stoned to death. Yet he did not die in vain. Christianity had then become the State religion, and so deep and lasting was the influence caused by his protest, that presently the decree went forth that these huge walls should no more echo to the yells of triumph or the groans of dying men.

* * * * * *

The persecutions of the Christians were not continuous. There were occasional periods of repose; but the followers of Christ were never really safe until the victory of the emperor Constantine over his imperial rival Maxentius in the year 313. This was indeed a turning-point in history, for from that moment paganism was doomed and Christianity was destined to become the State religion.

A mystery hangs about the memorable event known as the conversion of Constantine. One thing is certain. It did not resemble that of St. Paul, although a vision is said to have attended it; nor was it followed by a blameless life. The step was doubtless one that Constantine had long considered. He evidently realized the immense importance of his choice. Professedly, he was still a pagan, took part in the heathen sacrifices, consulted soothsayers, and bore the title of a high priest in the old religion. Nevertheless, the Christians had of late prodigiously increased in number. Their God might be a deity well worth placating and perhaps preferring.

When, on the morning of October 27, 313, he faced his adversary on the bank of the Tiber, so far as numbers went, the chances of the battle were against him. His army was composed of only 90,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, while that of Maxentius consisted of 170,000 infantry and 18,000 cavalry. Moreover, Constantine had hitherto, for the most part, fought only with barbarians; now he was confronted by trained Romans and experienced troops from Africa. Constantine was not, however, of Napoleon's opinion that God is always on the side of the heaviest battalions. He had secured for himself a supernatural ally. Something had happened. The story which has come down to us was one which Constantine himself was

* Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, Vol. I, p. 352.

fond of relating, and which the historian Eusebius states he heard from the emperor's own lips. It was to the effect that, in his perplexity, he had asked the Christians' God to give to him some visible sign and promise of His protection. Soon after, while marching with his troops, he suddenly beheld, outlined against the evening sky, a shining cross, bearing the well-known inscription: *In hoc signo vinces*. On the following day, he announced this vision to the army, and added that Christ had subsequently appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to have the cross and the monogram of Jesus Christ displayed on the imperial standard. This was done and, thus adorned, the famous *Labarum* was borne into the conflict. The victory was complete; Maxentius and thousands of his followers perished in the Tiber; and Rome itself, the capital of the world and the stronghold of paganism, was the victor's prize.

* * * * * *

Whatever we may think of Constantine's convictions, the result of his decision was stupendous, and that is all which here concerns us. It seems to have been an illustration of the text: God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. No doubt the victory of Constantine at the Milvian Bridge was providential, but the chief instrument used by Providence was undeniably human. In fact, as we survey the history of the Church, we realize more and more the truth of St. Paul's words: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," and sometimes they are very earthen indeed. Nevertheless, though the weapons may be blunt and the human agents may be weak and wavering, the victory is gained and, kneeling in humility, we give the praise to God.

* * * * * *

Just when the Emperor secretly decided to adopt the new religion officially is hard to say. He had not waited for this victory before showing tolerance and good-will to the Christians of Northern Italy and Gaul. In 312 he had issued a decree which put an end to their persecution and gave to them full liberty to worship Christ; and now he granted them extraordinary privileges. He invited Christian bishops to his court and put at their disposal for the journey thither the imperial post. He entertained them at his table, and aided and protected them in every way.

And at last there came a day, nearly three centuries after Nero, when the emperor Constantine took into his royal hands a spade and with it, in humility, upturned the first earth for the foundations of the basilica of the martyred fisherman, Peter!

Nevertheless, Constantine did not forget that the vast majority of his subjects were still Pagans, and accordingly had to proceed

with the utmost tact and prudence. The mighty cult of paganism did not, therefore, fall at once with a stupendous crash. It rather gradually disappeared like a dissolving view, or as a monster iceberg slowly melts in the mild air and warmer waters of a southern sea.

The doctrine and the personality of Jesus of Nazareth had resisted the efforts of the greatest empire that the world has ever seen. His followers had for three centuries valiantly defended their faith and finally had saved it. The age of persecution for the Church had ended. Before it stretched away a path of progress through the centuries, the like of which the world had never seen. The missionaries of the Cross went forth to civilize Europe and to win its heathen millions to the faith of Christ; and one by one, the countries which we now call France, Ireland, England, Scotland, Germany, and Spain were brought into the Christian fold. The two Americas with many islands of the seven seas were in due time to follow them. No page of history is more instructive and ennobling than that record. I would that every reader of these lines would also read that masterpiece of erudition, research, and veracity—Montalembert's *Monks of the West*—the beautiful English translation of which is now, unfortunately, difficult to find. To read it is to receive a liberal education, and it will afford benefit and delight to every elevated mind. Valuable also are the late Dr. Forster's *Lives of the Popes*, the justice, fairness, and erudition shown in which can hardly be surpassed. The separate biographies of St. Gregory the Great and other missionary Popes are stimulating. Later, when Columbus had passed out beyond the Pillars of Hercules, had crossed the unexplored Atlantic, and had planted the Cross on the island of San Salvador, the vast American continents were gradually won for Christ and the Church, and the thrilling story of the French Jesuits in North America and Canada, as related by the historian, Francis Parkman, is a wonderful revleation of the power of Christian love and zeal. It is of course important to distinguish between the fervour and self-sacrifice of the noble priests who suffered every form of hardship, torture and often martyrdom, if they might only win souls to Christ, and the rapacious, cruel, military, and commercial adventurers who—especially in the New World—often followed them, lured by the lust of gold. The two are often confused and misplaced in the minds of the uninformed.

* * * * * *

It is almost incredible, how much ignorance exists among supposedly educated Christians in regard to the history of the Church. So far as I know, the subject is never taught in any Protestant institutions except theological seminaries. I think I am not mistaken also when I say that to most Protestants the famous Fathers and Saints of the Church—such as Polycarp, Irenæus, Clement of Rome, Clement

of Alexandria, Jerome, Chrysostom, Origen, Tertullian, Ambrose, and even St. Augustine—are practically unknown, both as regards the influence they exerted and the books they wrote. The majority of the young people of to-day know little even of the Bible; and those who go to Church and Sunday-school acquire scarcely anything more of Church history than what is gained by a superficial study of the Acts of the Apostles. After the conclusion of that book, the curtain falls for them, and practically all that happened between that time and Luther's reformation, 1500 years later, is a blank. Perhaps this is due to a wish to keep those youthful minds from contact with the Popes and "Roman superstitions." The English Homily's remark about "eight hundred years of damnable idolatry" may not be any longer deemed a true description of the Middle Ages, but still some lurking fear of the "Scarlet Woman" must exist in Protestant minds, or else there would not be in them such lamentable want of knowledge concerning most of the early saints and martyrs, together with such Popes as St. Gregory the Great, Hildebrand, Leo the Great, and the founders of the Benedictine, Cistercian, and Jesuit Orders: St. Benedict, St. Bernard, and St. Ignatius. Unknown are also the immortal missionaries, St. Columbanus in France, St. Patrick who preached the Gospel to Ireland, St. Columkil who brought it to Scotland, St. Boniface who converted Germany, St. Gall who laboured in Switzerland and hundreds of other "Monks of the West" to whom the most of Europe owes its civilization and conversion. Catholics, on the contrary, as a rule (provided they have been educated in Catholic institutions), know much more of these spiritual giants of the past. Hence they feel themselves privileged to enjoy almost as their very own the glories of the ancient, pre-Reformation Church, which by so many others are ignored.

What a distrust of the work and power of the Holy Ghost it shows to shut out centuries of the history of the Church of Christ, of which their own forgotten forbears were good members! And what an intellectual and spiritual loss!

* * * * * *

The two great Christian bodies—Catholic and Protestant—seem to me sometimes like two sons of the same Mother, both of whom love and reverence her, but not to the same extent. For one has turned his back upon her, refused to obey her positive commands, repudiated many of her sacraments, and dealt her a terrific blow by leaving her in anger and revolt. The other, much the elder, has also grieved her many times by waywardness, but still has always kept the faith and often knelt in sorrow at her feet, to shed repentant tears, to promise obedience and to participate in her divinely given sacraments—*rejecting none.*

Will the younger son ever recognize his fundamental error and return to her?

God grant it! If not, one thinks of the poet's picture of the little streamlet, divided on the mountain-side into separate rivulets, which, turning from each other, finally become two mighty rivers, sweeping towards widely different oceans.

> "From the same cradle's side,
> From the same mother's knee
> One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
> One to the peaceful sea."

Chapter VIII

THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS

"After the burden and heat of the day,
The starry calm of night;
After rough the and toilsome way,
The sleep in the robe of white.

No sighs are heard in the shadowy place,
No voices of them that weep;
They have fought the fight, and finished the race,
God giveth them rest in sleep."

"Truth for ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own."

LOWELL.

BENEATH the undulating surface of the Roman Campagna lies a second Rome, invisible, mysterious, hidden from the light of day, and haunted by the stillness of a buried world. It is the city of the Catacombs. Close by the capital of the Cæsars and beneath the feet of the former mistress of the world, this subterranean Rome grew steadily for three hundred years, ruled by the living, peopled by the dead.

When the two great apostles, Peter and Paul, after their martyrdom were laid to rest, one on the Vatican Hill, the other by the Via Ostia, who could have deemed it possible that there would come a time when the smaller of these cities would surpass the greater, when the persecuted Church, which had for centuries lain shrouded in sepulchral darkness, would have a glorious resurrection, when one of the most beautiful basilicas in Rome would bear the name of the tent-maker of Tarsus, and when the fisherman of Galilee would take the place of Cæsar?

* * * * * *

All travellers to Rome visit the catacombs, but few inspect them thoroughly, and fewer still appreciate their vastness and profound significance. This is due partly to mental unpreparedness, and partly to the circumstance that, in order to see them, visitors must march in single file through scores of subterranean galleries, often in company with an uncongenial crowd. Some of these strange companions are chiefly occupied in holding the tapers given them in such a way as

to protect their clothes from candle-grease; others are afraid of the darkness; others complain of the stifling atmosphere; while many make facetious sallies about what would happen if the guide dropped dead in this uncanny labyrinth. If one must visit the catacombs under such conditions, it were perhaps better not to visit them at all. It is not absolutely necessary to see a sacred or an historic place in order to enjoy it. One of the greatest gifts of God is a sympathetic imagination which kindles at a fine description. The only thoroughly agreeable fellow-traveller is one who has the mind to understand, the heart to love and the enthusiasm to enjoy. However great the number of foreigners may be who visit the Old World, a vastly greater number never go there; yet it would be rash to conclude from this that the educated stay-at-homes know less of foreign lands than those who visit them in person. It all depends on mental preparation and . . . propinquity.

Moreover, by selecting a less popular hour and patiently waiting for a favourable opportunity, one can, at certain seasons, manage to avoid those noisy and disturbing caravans. It is a great advantage to enter these hallowed precincts as a gentleman; a still greater one to enter them as a Christian; a supreme advantage to enter them as a Catholic. The devout believer feels a spiritual kinship with these heroic dead. He realizes that there lies open here before him a wonderful, illustrated volume of the history of the early Christian Church—a volume dating back to the apostles, and bearing the names of martyrs, Popes, and countless thousands of humbler followers of the same Saviour whom we adore.

These walls are eloquent of the faith of those of whom the world was not worthy. They tell us by their numberless inscriptions that the martyrs who lie buried here believed what we believe, "One army of the living God"!

"Now the labourer's task is o'er;
Now the battle-day is past;
Now upon the farther shore
Lands the voyager at last.

There the tears of earth are dried;
There its hidden things are clear;
There the work of life is tried
By a juster Judge than here;
Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servants sleeping."

* * * * * *

The Roman catacombs are one of the marvels of the world. Spiritually, they are inspiring; materially, they are stupendous; historically, they are of priceless value. The wielders of the picks

and shovels which constructed them were unconsciously undermining the foundations of the Roman empire. The fire which consumed the bodies of those whose ashes were reverently laid to rest here, could not burn out the faith for which they died. They gave their lives that it might come to us intact. And when they died, confessing Christ, the greater part of Europe was unknown and America in her primeval forests was still to sleep in savagery for centuries. Nothing could reconcile us to the suffering and tragic ending of so many noble lives, but the thought that it was the necessary means, decreed by God, for the sanctification and strengthening of the Church militant and the conversion of the world.

Consider the extent of these catacombs. There are in all about fifty different cemeteries, isolated from one another by roads and surface-buildings, beneath which it was forbidden to excavate. They form a network of narrow underground passage-ways which, if linked together end to end, would cover a distance of perhaps a thousand miles. Estimates vary greatly. M. de Rossi, taking as an average the construction of six catacombs, calculates that the galleries would have a length of 587 geographical miles.* The total number of Christians buried here must have been at least two million; many archæologists reckon them at three times that number. For we must bear in mind that there are several stories of these corridors, the lowest levels being the last excavated; and in these passages, to right and left, are many layers of graves. When a further horizontal extension of the crypt became impossible on the original level, the grave-diggers of necessity went lower and constructed a new series of shelves; and this process was often repeated two or three times. The corridors between the tombs are rarely more than two or three feet wide and are completely lined with horizontal cells, or *loculi*, roughly suggesting berths in a ship, which rise above one another in four or more tiers. Some of these *loculi* are broad enough to accommodate three or even four bodies side by side. On every floor the same scene is repeated, save that the darkness seems to be more profound, the air more suffocating, as one descends. Occasionally we come upon little chambers, called *cubicula*, which once contained the tombs of an entire family or of members of some funeral society. Hither the surviving friends and relatives sometimes came for prayer. At intervals we find a more elaborate tomb, made with an arch surmounting the *loculus*. In such cases the slab was laid horizontally and could be used as an altar for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

* * * * * *

* Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 319.

The original nucleus of these cemeteries was a family tomb, built for the owner himself and the members of his household, perhaps also for a few of his friends. It was essential, however, that they should be Christians. It was the invariable rule for the faithful not to make use of the burial-places of pagans, and not to admit the latter into theirs.* This seclusion had two motives. One was the pathetic desire of the persecuted to repose in Christ together. They had in unison suffered for their faith; many of them had laid down their lives for it; now in their death they did not wish to be divided. They had perhaps come to Rome from widely different lands and were, in many instances, of diverse races and divergent social ranks: Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Egyptians, Gauls, freedmen, and slaves; but for them there was no longer Jew or Greek, bond or free; they were all one in Christ and awaited there His coming. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one glorious hope of immortality!

They did not share the feeling of Mæcenas, who wrote: "I care not for a tomb; nature will bury my relics."†

Some of them could have been buried, had they preferred, with their pagan relatives elsewhere; but they had an irresistible longing to be with those who were their brethren in Christ, and they especially desired to rest in close proximity to their Popes, their bishops, and the martyrs.

* * * * * *

Many of these tombs were also built by co-operative societies of Christians. The Roman law was, it is true, hostile to the formation of secret associations, but "funeral-colleges," as they were called, were permitted among the poor, who were financially unable to meet, individually, the expenses of a decent sepulture. Even slaves could, with the permission of their masters, join these "funeral unions." This custom was finally so firmly established, that, after Constantine became the master of the world, the restitution of Christian cemeteries—which under the persecution of Valerius had been confiscated—was made, not to private individuals, but to the *Church*. At first, however, the ground above this vast necropolis was the private property of the owners, and, as such, was legally protected. Further security was given by the Roman law which, as a rule, respected mortuary sites of every kind. The Christian catacombs were, therefore, *in normal times*, legally safeguarded from

* An inscription has been found here which declares that the owner of the tomb has built it for himself and his relatives (*sibi et suis*), *provided they are believers in Christ* (*fidentes in Domino*). Another tombstone with a similar inscription was discovered in 1864.

† *Nec tumulum curo; sepelit natura relictos.*

violation, like all other Roman burial-places, and were recognized as private or "collegiate" properties. Their management was subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

They had, however, a very chequered existence. The times were *not* always normal. The very earliest epoch was the best. Then some of the Christians built their tombs above the ground, and these were not disturbed until the age of persecution spread its blight upon the Church. We read in the Acts* that Paul, even when in custody or under police supervision, "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, *no man forbidding* him."

Yet, four years later, Paul was beheaded! As elsewhere, the Jews, who naturally hated the Christians, incited the first attacks upon them here, and Nero did the rest. Still, even this was followed by nearly thirty years of quiet; for there were periods of toleration and leniency under the emperors, and subterranean burials then went on, as such events were wont to do. Whenever a wave of persecution broke upon the Church, however, then stairways in the catacombs were destroyed, corridors were blocked, and the usual ways of ingress and of egress were walled up and new ones made. Towards the last of the persecutions, one never knew what to expect. One emperor, like Valerian (253), would confiscate the catacombs; and his son, Gallienus (268), would give them back again. Diocletian (303) confiscated them anew; Maxentius (305), his successor, restored them to their owners. Finally, Constantine, by his Edict of Milan, in the year 312, granted to the Church liberty of worship and free possession of her churches and cemeteries for ever.

* * * * * *

We see, then, that these catacombs were not made illegally. The authorities were aware of their existence. Moreover, this was a form of burial already known. The Christians did not invent it. After all, dead bodies must be either cremated or inhumed, and it was the interest of the State to have this properly done by someone.

Rock-hewn sepulchres had been for centuries common in the Orient. We read of them in the Old Testament. We find them also among the Etruscans in Italy. The custom of constructing catacombs at Rome was probably brought thither by the Jews. There were, in fact, both Jewish and Pagan subterranean cemeteries in the Campagna. These were, however, relatively few in number, and can be easily distinguished from the Christian crypts. The latter are recognizable by two characteristics. First, they are much more

* xxviii. 30–31.

extensive than the others; nowhere else is there such a number of galleries and tombs.

Secondly, the niches in the Jewish cemeteries were left open, whereas those of the Christians were shut. When the Christian body had been laid on one of these narrow mural shelves, the opening was closed with slabs of marble or with bricks, on which the name of the deceased was painted or inscribed. With the lapse of time these bricks and slabs detached themselves or were removed by plunderers, leaving sometimes a little mass of human dust, surviving many centuries.

* * * * * *

The question naturally arises: How did the Christians ever get permission to make such excavations and to own them? It was an affair of acquiring possession of the surface-ground by purchase, gift, or inheritance. When this was done, whatever use was made of the underlying soil depended on the owner's will subject to State approval. No opposition seems to have been made. The Christian owners sank a shaft in one corner of the lot and began the excavation and construction. Many labourers were thus employed. Upon the walls are found occasionally representations of the excavators at their work, pick in hand, cutting the overhanging roof as they advanced, through layers of calcareous stone. The substance excavated was not hard rock, adapted for building purposes; but a soft, volcanic stone, called *tufa granulata*, which was sufficiently solid to remain in place and was easily worked. Still, the labour was prodigious. De Rossi calculates that the construction of these cemeteries involved the excavation of 96,000,000 cubic feet of stone and earth. Of course, it was a work of at least two hundred and fifty years; but even so, the catacombs cover such an enormous area and contain so many burial-shelves, that it was once supposed that they were not the cemeteries of the Christians only, but of the city's poor in general, including those of all religions. But half a century's excavation and research have proved this theory untenable. The work involved in their construction is, however, so immense, that those who rediscovered them, in 1578, after centuries of oblivion, doubted whether they were really the achievement of the Christians, or whether they were not abandoned quarries which the Christians had appropriated and adopted for their use. Sceptics queried how a small, and for the most part poor, society could have raised the money for the purchase and the excavation of such endless subterranean galleries and what they could have done with all the earth extracted,* and

* Often the soil, thus extracted from new galleries, was used to fill up old ones.

how they could have found the necessary time for such an herculean task, while having to earn their living? This theory of abandoned quarries acquired confirmation from the fact that there had actually been some quarries near these walls of Rome. Ancient writers mention them. Suetonius relates* that Nero, as he fled from Rome in terror, was advised to take refuge in them, but he refused and said that he did not wish to bury himself alive. Nevertheless the archæological researches of De Rossi have rendered that explanation of the catacombs, as a whole, impossible. Their extremely narrow galleries, crossing one another at right-angles and the small chambers, or *cubicula*, would not have been suitable for extracting building material even if there had been any here. Moreover, the quarries which have been found in the Campagna were very differently arranged and many of them were only sand-pits. Out of thirty quarries examined, only five could have been transformed into catacombs. *All the rest were made by the hands of Christians.*

* * * * * *

Of course the catacombs had shafts for hauling up the excavated soil and also sky-lights, called *Lucernaria*, which were rather large openings made through the tufa, lying between the galleries and the light of day. These gave air as well as light. In times of persecution they were closed by a layer of earth, and thus concealed. At their bases are always found two or more adjoining chambers, which could be used for religious or funeral services. Without these shafts the foul air would have made a long-continued meeting of worshippers impossible. Special seats were dug in the tufa of these chambers for the priests.

The endless rows of mural tombs, the stories superimposed on one another, and the interminable lanes, which honeycomb the soil, afford a striking proof of the number of Christians in Rome before the end of the third century, and also of the rapidity with which Christianity must have spread there. For most of this work was done before the conversion of Constantine. It shows that there was no exaggeration in the boast of Tertullian as to the increase of the Church of Christ. Already in the time—only thirty years after the death of Jesus—of Nero, Rome contained, according to Tacitus, a great multitude of them (*multitudo ingens*).

Why did they attach so much importance to this communal burial of their dead? Undoubtedly because of their implicit faith, not only in the immortality of the soul, but in the literal resurrection of the body. St. Paul had both preached and written: "There are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; but one is the glory of the

* Suetonius, *Nero*, 48.

celestial, and another of the terrestrial. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory: it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. . . . For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise again incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

These sublime words were no doubt read aloud *within these catacombs* thousands of times, to give hope and consolation to the afflicted.

Tertullian tells us that a priest officiated at the funerals,* and that these tombs were consecrated by Christian hymns and prayers. No doubt passages from Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians and Corinthians† and from the Gospels were also read aloud, as the loved forms were laid away to rest. The Christian poet Prudentius (348), in his hymn for funerals, wrote: "Soon will come the day when warmth will reanimate these bones, when the blood will again course through these veins, and when life will once more take possession of this dwelling which it lately left."

And this the early Christians believed would occur in the immediate future. Meanwhile, during the brief interval of waiting for Christ's coming, they deemed it fitting that their bodies should repose together in a worthy and secure asylum.

* * * * * *

Alas! the security of that asylum was not long to last. Wave after wave of cruel persecution broke against it. M. de Rossi finds traces of the persecutions everywhere; new pathways cut in haste, old ones blocked up and hidden, to avoid profanation; and secret exits in case of a surprise. All these and other precautions could not, however, always protect them. There were sometimes "false brethren" who betrayed them. The soldiers of the emperors more than once entered the catacombs and pitilessly cut down those who tried to flee.

It is known that one chapel was walled up, enclosing hopelessly the little band of Christians who had gathered there to worship Christ beside the tomb of a martyr. The Pope Damasus caused this to be found and partly opened. The skeletons of the faithful lay where they had perished of hunger.

* * * * * *

Researches in the catacombs have given us some surprising results. It has been generally supposed that Christianity in the first part of

* Tertullian, *De Anima*, 51. † 1 Thess. iv. 12–17; 1 Cor. xv.

its career was found only among the poorer classes, and that, especially in Rome, the converts were exclusively humble artisans, freedmen and slaves. Yet when we speak of slaves and freedmen, we must not think of them as necessarily illiterate. Their masters often gave them an elaborate education, if not to use them as their secretaries, at least in order to sell them at a high price. They frequently became (especially as freedmen) distinguished officials, teachers, writers and even poets of some merit.

Celsus, like many others, mocked at the rabble of simple, ignorant and uncultivated people who were Paul's first converts, and it cannot be denied that for a time it was literally true that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called." But were there no others? M. de Rossi thinks there were. He was astonished to find that some of the oldest catacombs are the best adorned with elegant mural paintings, and concludes that, among the multitude of slaves, freedmen and workmen, there must have been also some rich and distinguished Christians who decorated their own tombs and perhaps those of others, and above all embellished the atriums and little chapels near them. On several of these have been deciphered some of the greatest family-names of ancient Rome, and it is certain that members of these illustrious households became Christians at an early date. St. Paul, as we know, preached the Gospel among the slaves and freedmen of the emperor's palace, and it is probable that among his converts there were some of high rank, even when it was still dangerous to be Christians. It was no doubt at first a small minority, but it existed, and the fact explains how humbler followers were often warned of coming persecution and protected from it. *Deus adjuvante, non timendum.*

* * * * * *

For those who do not feel that this is sacred ground, and who know little and care less about the epoch of Church history represented here, these silent crypts may seem monotonous and gruesome; but for the visitor who comprehends how eloquent this silence is, the impression produced by this city of the dead is overwhelming. Not simply because these are the relics of a mighty multitude whose souls are now in heaven, but because in many instances they are memorials of countless heroes of the Faith, who came to their eternal felicity through great tribulation and had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The catacombs are the archives of the primitive Church. No other monuments of early Christianity bring us so near to Christ, the apostles and the saints, as do the catacombs. Within them the mutilated bodies of many martyred Popes and bishops reposed, until the inroads of barbarians rendered their burial-places insecure. And these historic walls are like old manuscripts and

illustrated missals, faded, dim and scarcely legible to the untrained eye, but full of information for the practised scholar.

Too much, however, must not be expected from them. These sepulchral walls were not designed to be a mural catechism for the infant Church. The dogmas of the Church were not engraved on tables of stone, like the Decalogue, but on the fleshy tables of the heart. The paintings and the epigraphs are spontaneous expressions of affection or of prayer. The skill and patience of archæologists have deciphered hundreds of inscriptions on the tombs and walls of the little chapels and also have discovered many faded frescoes, which steal forth, phantom-like, from the obscurity of centuries, when a strong light evokes their presence. Naturally, the oldest inscriptions are in Greek, for not only was Greek then the most widely diffused and universally spoken language in the empire, but it was also the official language of the Church.

We see a trace of this usage in the ritual of the Mass to-day, "Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison," etc. After Constantine had removed the seat of empire to Constantinople, the language of the Western Church gradually became Latin.

Only very rarely is the age of the deceased or the date of death given. "The time was at hand," they said; what did it matter? Nor were any titles mentioned in the epitaphs. "There is no difference among us," wrote Lactantius (about 300), "between the poor and the rich, the slave and the free. We give to one another the name of brothers, because we believe we are all equal."

Among the epitaphs collected by M. de Rossi and other archæologists are many direct appeals to the dead, to pray for and intercede for the living: "In thy prayers *intercede for us*, for we know that thou art with Christ." Another, addressed to a saintly young girl who had just died, reads: "Invoke God for Phœbe and for her husband!" "Sweet soul, pray for thy brothers and companions!" "Cause by thy prayers that God may forgive my sins!"

Or the appeal is made directly to Christ: "Lord Jesus, remember our child!"

In some cases it is the soul of the deceased that speaks *to those who visit his grave:* "I beseech you, brethren, when you come here to pray, and when you with your whole soul invoke the Father and the Son, remember Agape, that Almighty God may keep him for all eternity!"

Sometimes the appeal is made directly to the saints:

"O martyred saints, remember Dionysius!"
"Pray that Verecundus and his family may have a happy death!"
"Holy martyrs, in your prayers bear in mind Mary!"
"The holy martyrs shall be thine advocates with God."

"Ruth, so obedient and affable towards all, shall live in peace under the protection of Peter."

The motif of many thousands of epitaphs here is a tender desire for the welfare of the dead. "Mayest thou live in God!" (*Vives in Deo*). "Live in peace!" (*Vivas in pace*).

"To my sweet nurse Paulina, who is with Christ among the blessed." One reads: "Dear Cyriac, beloved son, live in the Holy Spirit!" "Mayest thou live in the Holy Spirit!" "May thy spirit rest among the saints!" "May those who need consolation be relieved by the prayers of the Church!"

And how much consolation they must have needed, those faithful Christians, who after witnessing the horrible sufferings and death of their dear ones, crept hither through the darkness of the night and the still greater darkness of these tortuous alleys to lay their burdens at the feet of their Saviour! Some of them doubtless heard read to them here the letter of St. Cyprian, in which he wrote: "Our Church is fortunate! The Lord protects and honours it. Till now it was brilliantly white through the good works of its members; now He accords to it the glory of being reddened by the blood of its martyrs. Neither lilies nor roses are wanting in its crown!"*

* * * * * *

The paintings on the tombs of the apostolic age, pallid and defaced though they are, are especially interesting as marking the first attempts at Christian art. This, at the outset, naturally borrowed much from the pagan background of mythology, adapting former representations as far as possible to the new ideas.

That some of the Christian dogmas are not more clearly expressed here is not strange. As the faithful were at any time liable to persecution and proscription, *they did not wish to have the mysteries of their religion scoffed at or profaned.* Hence they preferred to represent them by symbols or conventional signs, the significance of which was known to them alone. Among these were the *anchor*, symbol of the Cross; the dove, typical of the soul; the palm, denoting victory; the Lamb; the Good Shepherd and the barque of Peter. Especially frequent was the figure of the fish, which to the initiated represented Christ, because the Greek word for fish is ἰχθυς, the letters of which are initials of the Greek words: Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Ὑιὸς Σωτήρ, (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour).

On some sarcophagi we find sculptured representations of the three Persons of the Trinity, as well as the symbols of the Eucharist, the resurrection of Lazarus, and the adoration of the Magi, who point to the star above the head of the divine Child.

* *Epistle* 10.

The portrayals of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the meal of fish on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias, and the miracle of Cana, are also allegorical allusions to the mystery of the Eucharist. The water gushing forth from the rock struck by Moses is typical of the fountain of grace* ; and the scene of Daniel in the lions' den is a reminder of how God can deliver the faithful from danger.

There is, however, one very old epitaph which mentions the Trinity specifically: "May Jucundianus, who believed in Jesus Christ, live in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."

Belief in the angels is attested by the oldest prayers for the dead, in one of which the heavenly messengers are referred to as having summoned heavenward the little son of a Christian father.

Constant references to Baptism are made, never by that express ecclesiastical term, but by such symbolic words as *accepta gratia Dei.* Thus: "To the memory of the well-deserving Antonia Cyriaces, who lived eighteen years, two months and twenty-six days and died, a virgin, the fourth day after *having received the grace of God* (Baptism).

Highly suggestive is the fact that many of these epitaphs refer to children one or two years old, which shows that infant baptism was then practised. In fact, one inscription tells us that a woman, seeing her beloved grandchild near death, asked the Church to have him baptized.

The figure most frequently seen is that of Christ, as the Good Shepherd, bearing on His shoulders the lamb which He has rescued. Many of Christ's miracles are also crudely reproduced.

* * * * * *

The Blessed Virgin and Child are represented in a painting on the vaulted roof of a tomb in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, and this De Rossi believes to belong approximatively to the apostolic age. It is true that, during the first centuries of the Christian era, the Blessed Virgin did not have that large place in the liturgy of the Church that she enjoys to-day. But even before the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), which clearly defined her glorious exaltation, impartial history finds numerous traces in the catacombs of the homage given her. The doctrinal germ has developed powerfully, but the germ existed from the beginning. How could the early Christians have failed to understand the significance of the words addressed to the Blessed Virgin by the archangel Gabriel and by her cousin Elizabeth? And those of Mary herself: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"?

The early decorators of the catacombs did not introduce into

* We remember that St. Paul uses this allegory (1 Cor. x. 4), and says: "And that Rock was Christ."

their paintings purely Christian events, such as the Nativity, the Visitation, and scenes from the Saviour's life and passion. Their desire seemed rather to display Old Testament incidents and personalities, as *prototypes of the New.* But after the emperor Constantine had made Christianity the State religion, these symbols were no longer necessary, and there was a complete change of subjects represented in Christian paintings and sculptures and also in the mode of treating them.

* * * * * *

What, then, shall we say of the testimony which these ancient frescoes and inscriptions give us? In spite of the comparatively small number of them which remain, and despite all the injury they have received from time and man, they prove conclusively that *the essentials of the Catholic creed existed when the catacombs were built.* They tell us of an unquestioning faith in the final resurrection, as well as in God the Father, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, and in the existence of angels and saints, whose intercession is efficacious and is invoked. The hallowed dead who slumbered here had been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; the paintings of the Blessed Virgin and her Child give testimony of the homage paid to the Mother of their Saviour; the mystery of the Holy Eucharist was celebrated at these humble altars, and prayers for the dead and petitions for the intercession of the saints are still deciphered there in symbols and in epigraphs. Here, too, the relics of the Popes, the bishops and the martyrs were reverently cherished, as pious hearts recalled the saying of our Lord: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

* * * * * *

The fate of the cemeteries was a mournful one. When the new Christian emperor deserted Rome for Constantinople, the doom of the Western Empire was sealed, and only a hundred years after the advent of Constantine to universal power, Alaric and his hordes attacked and pillaged Rome and the Campagna. The result was ruinous to the catacombs. Man has destroyed far more than nature in the course of history; for, when he devastates, he does so with intelligence and for a purpose. The earth would have preserved these Christian tombs indefinitely, but neither they nor the mortuary pyramids of Egypt were able wholly to withstand the ravages of man. In this respect how lamentably stupid the human race has always been . . . and is! Of course the frequent persecutions of the Christians inflicted here irreparable harm, but it was nothing in comparison with the damage caused by the successive inroads of the

Goths, the Saracens, the Ostrogoths, and Lombards, who plundered all the tombs that they could reach, in the hope of finding hidden treasure.

Beginning with Alaric, in the year 410, when the last interment took place here, the catacombs were repeatedly the prey of sacrilegious vandals, whose search in many instances was only too successful, and family jewels, cameos, coins, and medallions, often buried with the dead, rewarded their cupidity.

Almost as bad as these were the subsequent injuries inflicted by the countless pilgrims who flocked to Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries and carried away such portable souvenirs as they could find. To them we owe, however, the valuable *graffiti*, or inscriptions, scratched with the point of some sharp instrument in the stucco which had been put on many of the walls for their better preservation. These are rough witnesses, but their pious invocations to the saints and martyrs shed much light upon those ages of Church history.

At length in the seventh century, it was deemed necessary to remove the bodies of the martyrs to churches within the city walls. Later still, in 817–824, Pope Paschal I, as a marble inscription testifies, transferred 2300 bodies to places of safety. Among these were the relics of St. Cecilia, which were taken into Rome and placed beneath the high altar of her church of the Trastevere, which had been erected over her house, where she had suffered martyrdom. Visitors will remember her beautiful recumbent statue there.

Then gradually the catacombs fell into neglect, and were almost forgotten. The shafts for light and air became choked with rubbish. The subterranean necropolis was as effectually hidden as the buried city of Pompeii. Spoliation and sacrilege had done their work; the dead were left at last in peace; and oblivion had placed a stone at the mouth of the sepulchre. There the vast cemeteries slumbered undisturbed until their rediscovery.

Then came the resurrection.

The linen grave clothes, "laid by themselves," and the carefully folded napkin had indeed been stolen and the sepulchre itself profaned. But the soul of the imprisoned Church was no more there! Like the "chambered nautilus," it had felt the impulse to abandon its outgrown shell and had heard the divine command:

> "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll!
> Leave thy low-vaulted past!
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free
> Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

For at last there came a time when Christ appeared before these catacombs, in which His Bride, the Church, was sleeping, but not

dead, and cried, as at the tomb of Lazarus: "Come forth!" And she came forth with joy from her dark sepulture of centuries, and looked upon an altered world. The mighty civilizations that had still been flourishing when she had crept for refuge thither, had passed away or were already moribund. Their splendid cities, temples, sacrificial shrines, and monuments had either vanished or were ruins. Even the capital on the Tiber had been deserted for the city on the Bosphorus. But in reality, though he knew it not, Constantine had, in leaving Rome, abandoned it to Peter. To-day, Christianity, crowned with immortal youth, is stronger than ever before, even in continents and islands then unknown. The Goths, who made of Italy a spectacle of triumphant barbarism, are now Christians; and their Gothic cathedrals reared to Christ and to His Church are among the sublimest and the most inspiring products of the Age of Faith. The religion of Jesus, born in Judæa and cradled in the catacombs, is now the sole remaining hope of a decadent world. For it is not *Christianity* that has "failed" after two thousand years. What has broken down is a paganized political combination, known as "*Christendom*," which profits by the Christian past, yet spurns it. Christendom is an order of society which owes all that is spiritually good in itself to Christ, whose divinity it denies. It has of true Christianity nothing but its name and this it exploits. Men speak of the "failure of Christianity": but it is not Christianity that has failed, but *Christendom*.

* * * * * *

On my last visit to the catacombs, as I emerged from their obscurity into the sunlight of a cloudless sky, a feeling of elation and a sense of victory swept over me. For, as I looked thence over the historic city, the first great monument that met my gaze was the majestic dome of the grandest temple of Christianity. The world has changed indeed since Rome beheld the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul. Their words are known to all the world and read of all men. Within the bloodstained area of the Colosseum the Cross of Christ now rises, like an inverted sword. Where wild beasts tore to pieces men and women who were loyal to their Lord, the Blessed Sacrament, at the recent Roman Eucharistic Congress, was given to thousands of adoring Christians. Upon the stately columns of the emperors Trajan and Marcus Aurelius stand now the statues of Saint Peter and St. Paul. The fire of the Vestals is extinguished, but the ever-burning lamp before the tabernacle of more than four hundred Roman churches proclaims the presence of the Son of God; and before forty-six altars in St. Peter's Church alone at the name of Jesus every knee is bent and every tongue confesses to the glory of God the Father. The palace of the Cæsars

is a mass of ruins, the Golden House of Nero leaves no trace, but beside the tomb of the Galilean fisherman sits his two hundred and thirteenth successor, and around the base of Michael Angelo's stupendous miracle-in-air the awe-struck worshipper reads the words of the Son of God: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Enraptured by the view, inspired by such thoughts, the pilgrim reverently bows his head and utters the words of the dying emperor, Julian the Apostate: "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!"

Chapter IX

THE CHURCH OF AUTHORITY

"For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

MATT. VII. 29.

"He that heareth you, heareth Me."

LUKE X. 16.

"Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia."

ST. AMBROSE.

"Roma locuta est, causa finita."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

"That St. Peter worked in Rome is a fact so abundantly proved and so deeply imbedded in the earliest Christian history, that whoever treats it as a legend ought in consistency to treat the whole of the earliest Church history as legendary."

DÖLLINGER.

THERE is to-day a general revolt against the two concomitants of civilization: *authority and discipline.*

In several European countries old constitutional, parliamentary monarchies have been replaced by dictatorships, in order to suppress disorder and communistic tendencies; in the family life of millions of homes in Europe and America parental discipline has broken down; in schools and colleges youth stands defiant of control. A hideous volume by Judge Lindsay is entitled *The Revolt of Youth.* Among the many Americans who call upon me year by year in my secluded mountain home, are fathers and mothers who with tears confess their inability to restrain their children—especially their daughters—from reckless liberty and . . . worse. One father told me that his daughters hated him because he had dared to criticize and oppose their cult of nudity, their boisterous manners, their smoking, their drinking and their cynical repudiation of the former rules of modest womanly behaviour. I asked him if he had at least the sympathetic approval of his wife in his attempt to regulate the conduct of his daughters. "No," he replied sadly; "she says that if our children acted differently, they would be ridiculed, become unpopular and miss the chance of marriage."

In my opinion no more illuminating picture of the present social life in America, as contrasted with the manners there half a century ago, can be found than in Booth Tarkington's recent book, *The World Does Move.* I am told by those who ought to know that the portrait

is correct and is underdrawn, rather than exaggerated. The same condition of things exists in many countries of the Old World. Is this an indication of the *Untergang der Abendländer?* I do not know.

But I have mentioned it, in order to emphasize the fact that the *Catholic Church* has, almost single-handed, set its face implacably against this social degeneracy, and has again and again refused to give Holy Communion to women who have knelt, insufficiently dressed, at the altar-rail. The Holy Father also has repeatedly condemned this deterioration in women's manners and has urged his bishops to oppose it strenuously. Placards to this effect are also posted on the doors of many churches. I admire the Catholic Church for this. The exercise of such authority and discipline may make it unpopular, but it will also win respect, and it already indicates its force of character. In an age of moral laxity, it warns the world that the strength of a nation lies in the modesty and purity of its women. It repeats what Chateaubriand said a century ago, that modesty is of vital importance to the moral life of humanity. It bids us listen to the voice of history, which teaches us over and over again and with appalling clearness that the permanency of human civilizations depends, not upon *mind* (for mentality, however brilliant, may be evil), but upon *morals*, and morals are valueless without the sanctions of religion. Not commerce, but character turns the scales of a people's destiny. Roman justice, Roman law, and Roman virtue made Rome great; but it is equally true that Roman vice destroyed her.

* * * * * *

The Catholic Church speaks with authority in matters of faith and morals, because its Founder, Jesus Christ, taught "as one having authority and not as the scribes," *and because in sending His apostles out to preach, that divine Teacher distinctly said: "*He that heareth you, heareth me.*" A Church, which is commissioned to teach a divine revelation, yet does *not* teach that revelation with authority, and which has no sanctions to enforce its teaching, is not a Church; it is an irresponsible society. In the great Church of Christ, which from a grain of mustard seed has expanded into a mighty tree, someone upon this earth must possess the right to exercise this decisive authority, as *the final arbiter.*

In every institution, whether it be a government, a tribunal, an army, a board of directors, or a sailing ship, there must be always, in the last analysis, a supreme commander. In the Catholic Church this supreme commander is the Sovereign Pontiff. In matters of faith and morals his ultimate, *official* pronouncement is law. But

* Matt. vii. 29.

why the Pope, for example, rather than the King of England or the House of Commons? Because the authority for investing that power in the person of the Holy Father is the commission given by Christ Himself to Peter and, naturally, to his successors. This statement is, of course, denied by Protestants, Rationalists, and Modernists.

In the world at large also, it often meets with ridicule and calumny. Yet *the Primacy of Peter is, and will ever be, inseparable from the Catholic Church*, and if so, the evidence for it is worth examining. I was convinced of the truth of this doctrine twelve years ago, and I believe it still more strongly now. Moreover, I hold that it can be irrefutably proved, and so long as this doctrine is still bitterly assailed, misrepresented, and misunderstood, it is essential for Catholics to explain and defend it.

* * * * * *

In the first place, even the casual reader of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles must have observed that Peter is always represented there as the leader and spokesman of the Twelve. Even Renan concedes this. "Peter," he says, "had a certain primacy. Peter, in affairs in general, possessed most authority."*

Whenever the names of the apostles are enumerated, *Peter always heads the list.* Thus in Matthew x. 2, we read: "*The first*, Simon who is called Peter." This qualification "first" must denote leadership, for in point of time Peter had not been the first of the disciples to come to Jesus. His brother Andrew had not only preceded him, but had actually brought him later to the Saviour.† Even when there is no specific enumeration of the apostles, Peter is always mentioned first, as if his precedence were a matter of course. Thus, in St. Mark i. 36, we read: "*Simon* and they who were with him followed after Him." And, in xiv. 37, in the description of Christ's agony in the Garden, Mark tells us: "He cometh and findeth them sleeping. And He saith to *Peter*: *Simon*, sleepest thou? Couldst *thou* not watch one hour?" It is noticeable that Mark, whose Gospel was dictated or at least edited by Peter, conceals nothing of the faults of that apostle, probably through Peter's own humility and self-depreciation. In St. Luke‡ also we find: "But *Peter* and they that were with him were heavy with sleep." Even if only the three most intimate disciples are mentioned, the order is "*Peter*, and John and James." In Acts ii. 29, we find: "And *Peter*, standing up with the eleven," etc. In Acts v. 29: "*Peter* and the apostles answered." In Acts x. occurs the account of a direct, thrice-repeated revelation made from God *to Peter only* in the house of Simon the tanner in reference to the centurion

* *Les Apôtres*, pp. 90, 279. † St. John i. 40–42. ‡ ix. 32.

Cornelius; and when, in response to the vision vouchsafed to Cornelius himself, the centurion asks: "What is it, Lord?" He is commanded: "Send men to Joppa and call hither one Simon who is surnamed *Peter*." In Acts i. 15, we read that it was *Peter* who, at the first gathering of the disciples after the crucifixion, made the proposal to choose a new apostle in place of Judas.

In Acts xv. it is stated that, when the elders and apostles had come together, *Peter* rose up and said: "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago *God made choice among us*, that the Gentiles *by my mouth* should hear the Gospel." When Peter had finished his discourse on this occasion, "all the multitude kept silence," that is, made no objections. It was *Peter* also who passed judgement on Ananias and Sapphira, who had sworn falsely—a proof that he was the one who had authority to do so. Such was the effect of his miraculous deeds,* that the sick were brought into the streets and laid on couches there, that at least his shadow might fall upon them.

It was from *Peter's* boat that Jesus, no longer confining Himself to the synagogue, began to address the multitude;† it was to *Peter*, as the evident leader of the group, that the tax-gatherers came and asked: "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" And it was *Peter* whom Christ commissioned to pay the tribute.‡ When Jesus said to the Twelve: "Will you also go away?"§ it is *Peter* who answers, as their spokesman: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Of *Peter* it is recorded: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto *Simon*." The angel at the sepulchre bids the women to go and tell the disciples "*and Peter*" that the Lord goes into Galilee. The Saviour said also that He had prayed *particularly for Peter* that his faith should not fail, and then commanded *him* to confirm the brethren.

We read also in the Acts,|| after Peter had recounted the episode with Cornelius, "While *Peter* was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word."

As a further illustration of the prominence which Peter held among the apostles and disciples of the early Church, it is significant that in the Gospels and Acts he is mentioned 195 times, and the rest of the apostles *reckoned all together* are mentioned only 130 times.¶

* Acts v. † Luke v. 3. ‡ Matt. xvii. 24–27.
§ John vi. 68. || x. 44.

¶ See the remarkable compilation of facts in regard to St. Peter made by Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., in his valuable study of this question entitled, *The New Testament Witness to Saint Peter*, Sheed & Ward, London, 1928.

Noteworthy also is the fact that when St. Paul mentions his visit to Jerusalem after an absence of three years, he says that he went thither "*to see Peter*," and tarried *with him* fifteen days; and he adds: "But other of the apostles I saw none, save James."*

No doubt he would have gladly seen the other apostles had they been there, but *Peter* was the one whom he especially wanted to see, and went to see, and consult with, as being naturally the leader.

The climax was reached when Peter, in response to the Master's question "And whom do you say that I am?" uttered the memorable words: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Then came at once from the Saviour the wonderful ratification of that statement: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven; and I say also to thee, that thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." These epoch-making words were an immediate reply to Peter's declaration of the article of faith which forms the corner-stone of the Christian Church: "*Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" They were the divine seal of approval given to Peter's utterance by the Son of God Himself.

Two things are of the utmost importance here: one is Christ's assertion that God the Father had made the revelation of this truth *directly to Peter;* the second is the fact that, in confirmation of the statement, Christ vouchsafed to *him* that undeniable prophecy and proclamation of His Church. Could any words be plainer? Could any ecclesiastical investiture be more complete or installation more conclusive? The character and destiny of His Church were thus defined and the primacy of Peter was settled for ever.

* * * * * *

Cardinal Manning's noble words on this subject are worth recalling: "It is said 'The primacy of Rome has been denied from the beginning.' Then it has been *asserted* from the beginning! Tell me that the waves have beaten upon the shore, and I will tell you that the shore was there for the waves to beat upon."†

It has, indeed, been asserted from the beginning, and the list of the Popes and Church Fathers who have maintained it would be a very long one. To quote but three of them: St. Chrysostom says‡: "Peter himself, the chief of the apostles, is the first in the Church."

* Gal. i. 18–19. † *Grounds of Faith*, p. 53.
‡ Third Homily on Penance.

Saint Augustine, in his enumeration of the bishops who had governed the Church of Rome, begins with the words: "We reckon from *Peter*. To Peter succeeded Linus, and to Linus succeeded Clemens," etc.* Saint Leo (Pope, 440–461), writes: "Peter was Prince of our Lord's apostles. Peter's See was Rome. Peter's successor I am. . . . There is no church under heaven which is not committed to my paternal care. There is none that the jurisdiction of St. Peter does not govern." And the Pope who openly proclaimed this was the one who overawed Attila at the gates of Rome and turned him back from sack and conquest. And Peter, to whom this spiritual sovereignty was ascribed, was *the only apostle* to whom an official position was given by the Master; the one who had the unique distinction of having been *the first among men to say to Christ: "Thou art the Son of God."*

Worthy of attention also is the testimony of Hegesippos, a converted Jew, who came to Rome in the first half of the second century to investigate the exact line of succession among the Christian bishops down to that time. In his researches Hegesippos must have spoken with men whose fathers could have personally known both Peter and Paul. At all events, he states that Linus was the first bishop of Rome *after the apostles' death;* and says, in agreement with Irenæus: "*After Peter and Paul had founded the Roman Church* and set it in order, they gave over the episcopate to Linus."†

Another proof of Peter's exceptional position among the apostles was given him by our Lord Himself after His resurrection. John relates the incident in the following familiar words: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' He saith unto Him: 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee.' He saith unto him: 'Feed my lambs.' He saith unto him again the second time: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' He saith unto Him: 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee.' He saith unto him: 'Feed my sheep.' He saith unto him the third time: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time 'Lovest thou me?' And he said unto Him: 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee.' Jesus saith unto him: 'Feed my sheep.'" By this thrice-repeated question, it is probable that the Saviour tenderly reminded Peter of his thrice-repeated denial of his Master; and by His thrice-repeated command: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, He indicated His complete forgiveness and the restoration of His confidence. It was to *Peter* that He now,

* *Epistle* 53 *ad Generosum.*

† Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 125.

in the last moments of His stay on earth, gave this commission to impart spiritual nourishment to His disciples, old and young. In other words, Peter was to be the bishop and shepherd of the souls, of whom Christ had said: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

But it may be objected that in the utterance of Cardinal Manning just quoted, he speaks of the "primacy of Rome," but not of the primacy of *Peter*. In this case, however, they are synonymous, as we shall presently see; for that Peter came to Rome, lived at Rome, was the first bishop of Rome, and died a martyr in Rome, no well-informed student of the subject any longer doubts. Is this too positive a statement? Let us investigate its justification.

* * * * * *

In the first place, it must be admitted that for a long time it was a matter of dispute. Most Catholics and Protestants held diametrically opposite opinions on the subject. The former affirmed it; the latter denied it, with a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." The Catholics at least had been instructed in the matter and they had, moreover, nineteen centuries of Christian tradition behind them. The Protestants, as a rule, knew nothing about it, but would not believe it because the Catholics did. Now, however, the researches, studies, and excavations in the neighbourhood of Rome during the last thirty years have led most sensible people to look at the question objectively and with much less prejudice and passion. The result has been undoubtedly in favour of the Catholics, as the great majority of Protestant scholars and virtually all archæologists frankly concede.

Lightfoot, Ellicott, Farrar, Westcott, Ramsay and Gore in England, and on the Continent, Renan, Wiesler, Harnack, Hilgenfeld, Thiersch and Ewald, accept it as unquestionable. In fact, Harnack, the great representative of Liberal Protestantism in Germany, and a scholar of profound erudition, says: "To deny Peter's coming to Rome was a great mistake; for *it is as clear as daylight to every student of history* who does not intentionally wish to shut his eyes to it."*

Lanciani also states positively that "For the archæologist *the presence and execution of SS. Peter and Paul in Rome are facts established beyond a shadow of doubt by purely monumental evidence.*" He adds that the possibility of reasonable scepticism on that point "is a matter of the past; at least for those who have followed the progress of recent discoveries and critical literature." Lanciani's language is unequivocal: "If my readers had the opportunity of

* *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, I, 244.

witnessing the discoveries made lately . . . they would surely banish from their minds the last shade of doubt." "However," he continues, "if my readers think that I am assuming, as proved, what they still consider a subject for discussion, I beg to refer them to some of the standard works published on this subject by writers who are above the suspicion of partiality."*

The modern literature on the problem is already surprisingly voluminous. When a famous Roman archæologist sent me recently a partial, polyglot list of the works which have been published on this subject since the beginning of the twentieth century, I was amazed at their number.

It is hardly possible in this chapter to do more than state the principal results arrived at by all this research, and to offer some details concerning them. Ultimately the reader who desires to pursue the topic further must betake himself to the most reliable sources of authority. I think he will find that, if "all roads lead to Rome," all roads in this investigation also lead to Peter. At all events, let us bear in mind the significant fact that, *for the first fifteen Christian centuries, the claim of the Church that Peter was her founder was never challenged.*

* * * * * *

The Catholic Church has always maintained that both Peter and Paul lived and suffered martyrdom in Rome. As regards the first of these apostles, we have his own testimony to the fact. The first Epistle of Peter is now universally admitted to be genuine and to have been written in Rome about the year 48, or fifteen years after Christ's crucifixion. In this Epistle he speaks of Rome as "Babylon." His words† are these: "The church that is in Babylon saluteth you, and so doth my son, Mark." The application of the name Babylon to Rome was at that time quite common,‡ first as a symbol of great luxury, but also—when employed by the Jews—as a reminder of their own captivity and suffering in that Oriental capital, which the subjugation of their nation by Rome now vividly recalled. St. John also uses the name, as referring to Rome, in the Apocalypse.§

If, then, the name Babylon represented Rome in Peter's Epistle, as it undoubtedly did, and if Peter and his amanuensis Mark sent their salutations *from this "Babylon"* to the Eastern churches, the apostle certainly must have been there.

In confirmation of the fact, we have two other very strong documentary proofs. One is the letter (still extant) which Clement,

* Lanciani, *ibid*, 123. † Chap. v. 13.

‡ *Standard Dictionary of the Bible*, Funk & Wagnalls, 1909. Art. "Peter." § xvii. 5.

Pope and Bishop of Rome, and an associate and fellow-labourer of St. Paul,* wrote to the church of Corinth in the latter part of the first century.

According to the Church historian Eusebius, Pope Clement died in the year 101, having been the Head of the Church for nine years. His letter to the Corinthians† abounds in quotations from the Gospels and Epistles, and also contains a direct allusion to Peter and Paul, whom he mentions by name as among the martyrs who had died "*among us*" (ἐν ἡμῖν) under Nero. "Among us" means, of course, "in Rome," and the writer groups the two apostles in a separate class, as a matter of course and as though the Corinthians were well aware of the fact. Pope Clement composed this letter about the year 93, that is, less than thirty years after the death of Paul and Peter. He had himself probably seen and conversed with them in his youth. It is incredible that he should have written thus, if they had not died in Rome.

Another important documentary proof of Peter's presence in Rome is afforded by a letter written to the Roman Christians by St. Ignatius who, in the year 107, suffered martyrdom in the Colosseum. He had for forty years been Bishop of Antioch, having been appointed to that post by St. Peter. During the persecution under Trajan, having maintained his loyalty to Christ, he was sent from Antioch to Rome to be devoured by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. On the way thither he wrote several letters to various churches in Asia Minor, as well as one to the Romans, in which he says: "I do not command you (lay down the law to you) *as Peter and Paul did;* they were apostles, I am a man condemned to death." The natural interpretation of these words is that both Peter and Paul had been, some forty years before, the spiritual directors of the Roman Church. St. Paul held that position for two years, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles. If St. Peter had not done the same, at that or some other time, why should Pope Clement and St. Ignatius link thus their names together? The writers of these letters were not ordinary laymen. One was the Pope and had been called by St. Paul his fellow-labourer‡; the other had known Peter personally and had been made by him Bishop of Antioch. Is it conceivable that these men should not have known where and how the leading apostles of Christianity ended their careers? It is unthinkable.

And where would Peter naturally have been put to death, if not in Rome, where he had laboured? Some critics have suggested Jerusalem or Antioch; but why then has no tradition come down to us of his martyrdom in one of those cities? On the contrary,

* Philippians iv. 3.

† *Epist. I Clem. ad Corinth.*, v. 1.

‡ Philippians iv. 3.

the tradition of the Church has always located that event in Rome. And why should Pope Clement have mentioned him as a martyr "among us" if it had not been true? We know from the Acts of the Apostles that St. Stephen and St. James were put to death in Jerusalem, but neither that city, *nor any other*, has ever contested Rome's claim to possess his grave. That circumstance alone, when one thinks of it, is conclusive.

The distinguished scholar Hans Lietzmann* says in view of these facts: "Any other supposition about the death of Peter creates one difficulty after another, and cannot bring forth in support of itself one single positive source of authority. It is incomprehensible to me how anyone, confronted with the facts in the case, can hesitate in his decision."

* * * * * *

Besides the letters of St. Clement and St. Ignatius, we find many confirmatory statements of Peter's presence in Rome in the writings of later Church Fathers.

Tertullian also (A.D. 160–202) speaks of the administration of baptism by the apostle Peter, and says: "There was no difference between those whom John had baptized in the Jordan and those *whom Peter had baptized in the Tiber*."† Here Tertullian evidently speaks, not of a single occurrence, but of a regular custom, which is a proof that Peter laboured for some time in and for the Church in Rome. In another place Tertullian says that the two apostles Peter and Paul gave in Rome their entire teaching and their blood (*Totam doctrinam cum sanguine profuderunt*).

The priest Cajus, at the beginning of the third century, pointed out to some heretics, who had been summoned by the Pope to Rome, the tombs of Peter and Paul, and said: "I can show you there the trophies of the apostles, for if you go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way, you shall behold there the tombs of those who founded this Church."

Clement of Alexandria (150–211) asserts that St. Peter preached in Rome the Gospel which was subsequently written down by Mark.

Dionysius of Corinth, writing to Pope Soter, about the year 150, speaks of the seed that had grown up in Rome *from the sowing of Peter and Paul*.‡

In order to determine the value of these statements, the first point to be settled is: Was there actually an early, apostolic Church

* Hans Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paul in Rom*, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin (1927), p. 238.

† *De Baptismo*, I.

‡ Eusebius, H. F. II. 25.

in Rome? There certainly was. In the year of our Lord 58—only twenty-five years after the Crucifixion—St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. In that Epistle* he says: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you *all*, that your faith is spoken of *throughout the whole world*"; and adds†: "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome *also*."

From this two facts are evident: first, that a Christian church, already "spoken of throughout the whole world," existed in Rome in the year 58 and must have had many members and considerable importance; the second fact is that St. Paul, when he wrote this Epistle to the Romans, *had not yet visited the city of the Cæsars*. Who then had founded there that flourishing, well-known Christian community? Someone of great authority and influence must have done so; for Paul expressly says in this Epistle to the Romans that he had desired to go to them *for many years*,‡ but had always been hindered from carrying out the project through fear of "*building on another man's foundation*."§ Whose foundation? It could not have been an insignificant apostle, before whom St. Paul thus effaced himself, almost as John the Baptist had retired before Jesus. Paul even went so far as to say‖ that his visit to Rome must be on that account only a casual one "on his way to Spain." As a matter of fact, we know that St. Paul did not arrive in Rome till three years later (61), and then came as a prisoner, to defend himself before the tribunal of Nero. There he then remained for two years.¶ The founder of the Roman Church could not have been the apostle James, for he remained continually at Jerusalem until his martyrdom (44).

Everything, therefore, points to St. Peter as being the one who achieved this distinction, and the tradition of centuries and the writings of many of the Church Fathers confirm this supposition.

Thus, the Church historian Eusebius (A.D. 324), in his *Chronicle*** writes: "The apostle Peter, after he had first founded the Church of Antioch, set out for the city of Rome, and there preached the Gospel and stayed there as prelate of the Church . . . He, Peter, besides the Church of Antioch, also first presided over that in Rome until his death."

The precise year in which St. Peter arrived in Rome is not certain, but can be approximately determined.

It will be remembered that St. Luke†† states that when St. Paul arrived in Corinth from Athens, he found there "a certain Jew named Aquila, *lately come from Italy*, with his wife Priscilla, because the emperor Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome." Aquila and Priscilla were already Christians, and

* i. 8. † v. 15. ‡ xv. 23. § xv. 20–22.
‖ xv. 24. ¶ Acts xxviii. 30. ** II. 150. †† Acts xviii. 2.

when Paul left Corinth to go to Syria, he took them with him as far as Ephesus, where these two Roman Christians expounded "the way of God more perfectly"* to the eloquent Christian Apollos, who was much less thoroughly informed about Christian doctrine than they were. It is evident, therefore, that *they must have had in Rome a good instructor.* Now the edict of Claudius, expelling the Jews from Rome, was issued in the year 49; consequently there must have been already then a Christian Church in Rome sixteen years after Christ's death. In fact, it must have been there even earlier; for it is very improbable that the Roman Christians should have been converted in the first year of Peter's ministry in such numbers as to cause disturbances, which induced the emperor to banish the whole Hebrew colony.

The historian Suetonius says, regarding this incident: "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of *Chrestus*, he expelled them from Rome."† Suetonius supposed the disturber of the peace was Christ Himself; but it was probably *Peter's* preaching that exasperated the orthodox Jews because of its proselytising power. If we allow seven years for the establishment of that flourishing Christian community (and that amount of time is not excessive), we find ourselves in the year 42, which is precisely the date which St. Jerome calculated as the year of Peter's arrival in Rome, and which the tradition of the Church has always maintained.

A remarkable coincidence, confirmatory of the chronology of Peter's arrival and sojourn at Rome, is pointed out by Signor Orazio Marucchi in his very valuable book, which has just appeared (May, 1929), and is entitled in its English form, *The Evidence of the Catacombs for the Doctrines and Organization of the Primitive Church.*‡ The author is a renowned archæologist, who has devoted most of his life to research in the Roman catacombs. He calls attention to the fact that the Acts of the Apostles (Chap. xii.) tells us that Peter was put in prison in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa, and was miraculously liberated from captivity. This took place in the year 42. We read also (Chap. xv.) that Peter presided at an apostolic council in Jerusalem in the year 50. Of Peter's activity during those eight years we know nothing from Scripture, but he was probably then, as we have seen, in Rome. If so, he was no doubt compelled to leave with the banished Jewish colony in 49. He would naturally return at once to Jerusalem and thus could easily have been there to preside over the council in the year 50.

* xviii. 18, 26.

† *Claudius*, XXV. This was an erroneous form of Christus. Tacitus uses the correct form, Christus, and states that he was put to death in the reign of Tiberius (*Annals*, XV. 44).

‡ London (Sheed & Ward), p. 84.

According to this, the chronology would be as follows:

Peter's arrival in Rome A.D. 42 (nine years after the Crucifixion).
Edict of banishment by Claudius, 49.
Return of Christians to Rome after the death of Claudius, 54, or earlier.
Date of Paul's Epistle to the again flourishing Roman Church, 58.

It was from this revived, post-Claudian Church in the year 63 that St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Philippians, at the end of which occur the words: "The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household." In other words, everything in the letter indicates that Paul was then living in the midst of a well-reorganized and growing Church, some of whose members even belonged to the court of the emperor. How little they anticipated their impending doom!

* * * * * *

We cannot overlook, however, one difficulty in the way of accepting the fact of Peter's presence and death in Rome. This is the silence which Luke maintains concerning him in the latter part of his Acts of the Apostles. Singularly enough, after the apostolic council at Jerusalem Peter is no more mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Luke, the travelling companion, physician, and amanuensis of St. Paul, henceforth devotes himself to Paul exclusively. It is more than likely, however, from circumstances which we shall presently consider, that Luke intended to continue his story of the apostles in another work. In the Acts the author brings St. Paul to Rome, says very little of his doings there, and merely leaves him in a fairly liberal form of captivity, preaching the Gospel, "no man forbidding him." Why did he not write more? That was not the end of Paul's life, not even the end of his apostolic activity. Why did not Luke complete the record? Why did he not mention Peter as being in Rome? Various reasons for this have been suggested. Jülicher* thinks that the programme for the Acts, as outlined in the opening verses of that work, naturally ends with the unrestricted preaching of Paul in the city of the Cæsars. It was a noble climax. Jülicher even imagines that Luke did not wish to describe the death of Paul because he could not add to it a resurrection, as in the case of Christ!

Edward Meyer† thinks that a description of Paul's execution and of Nero's persecution would have brought a "discordant note" into the ending of the work, and would have marred the optimism

* Prof. Gustav Jülicher, *Einleitung in das N.T.*, 6th edition, p. 399.
† Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, III. 58.

which there dominates it. All of Luke's readers, he says, knew of the martyrdom; why should he mention it? An artistic writer like Luke would not have made such a literary blunder.

But surely neither of these explanations is satisfactory. Luke had already narrated the story of the martyrdom of Stephen with many interesting details, and his readers are to-day deeply moved by the description of Stephen's prayer and parting words. An account of St. Paul's death, written by a man of such ability as the third Evangelist possessed, would not have "marred" the narrative, but would have given to the Church for all time inspiring and imperishable words.

We may be sure that, if St. Paul's execution had already taken place before the completion of the Acts, Luke would certainly have described in touching words the tragic ending of that great career. When Luke wrote the last words of that volume, Paul was still alive and active, expected to be speedily set at liberty, and was already making plans for another missionary journey.* The Evangelist must therefore have felt that he had not told the whole of his story. Moreover, there was the additional life of Peter to be related. Luke had neglected him for some time, so absorbed had he been in the task of landing St. Paul safely in Rome.

The German theologian, Professor Zahn, advances the very reasonable theory that Luke intended to write a second volume of the Acts, in order to give an account of the further activities of both apostles. Why was this not done?

It has been suggested in the *Harvard Theological Review*† that the Acts was a posthumous publication. This is possible, but Luke concluded it in 63, and St. Paul died in 67, and Luke was with him in his last lonely days at Rome before the end.‡ Hence Luke lived at least till the year 67, and had abundant time in which to publish it during those four years. It is far more likely that he was, all that time, collecting new material for *a second volume*. It must be remembered that during the years following Paul's release the great apostle was busy "making history," and Luke no doubt was equally busy in recording it. It seems more likely that Luke published the Acts as we have it about the year of Paul's liberation (63), and that he intended to write another biographical and historical work, thus making with his Gospel a trilogy. When Luke himself died we do not know. Perhaps just after the beheading of St. Paul. This suggests other possibilities. Perhaps he had arranged in those last days in Rome the story of their visit to the Asian churches, and the manuscript was either lost or through his own death never finished. The mystery will probably never be solved. But whatever the cause

* Philippians i. 26. † XVII. 1924, p. 95. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. ii.

of his silence may have been, we know from other sources that the two apostles died in Rome, where they had lived and laboured. The purely negative arguments, based only on Luke's silence, weigh as nothing against the overwhelming positive testimony furnished by monuments, documents and immemorial tradition.

* * * * * *

In regard to St. Paul, we know that in the year 63 he left Rome to resume his interrupted mission work. Whither did he go? Many believe to Spain. That was not far away and communications by sea between Rome and Spain were easy and frequent. Such had been Paul's original intention before his captivity;* but now he was eager also to see once more his beloved churches in the East. Perhaps he fulfilled both these wishes. For he wrote from Rome to his favourite church—that of the Philippians†—that he hoped to send Timothy to them immediately and added: "I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come to you shortly." He may, therefore, have turned his liberty to account by first going to Spain in the year 63–64. It is true, we have no record of his having carried his apostolate thither; but how little we should know about Paul's other journeys and labours, had not St. Luke written the Acts! At all events, the Church Fathers, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Epiphanius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and Theodoret say that he did go to Spain; and Pope St. Clement, only thirty years after the apostle's death, affirms that Paul went "to the limits of the Occident." This can hardly mean anything but the Pillars of Hercules.

However this may be, St. Paul assuredly did, in the spring of the year 66, revisit Ephesus and other places in Asia Minor, and then went to Macedonia and to the island of Crete, where he left Titus to complete his apostolic work. When he wrote his second Epistle to Titus, he was on his way to Nicopolis in Epirus to pass the winter.‡ Père Prat§ thinks that the apostle did this, and penetrated into Dalmatia on the Adriatic. Then follows obscurity. All that can be subsequently gleaned is from Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

Just where Paul was again arrested is uncertain. Père Prat suggests Troas in Asia Minor, as the spot; for the apostle lodged there for a time in the house of Carpus, where he left his much regretted cloak, books and manuscripts, which he subsequently (writing from Rome during his second imprisonment) begs Timothy to bring to him.‖

The abandonment of such useful and precious objects raises the inquiry, whether it was not caused by a sudden arrest and a

* Rom. iv. 24. † ii. 19–24. ‡ Titus iii. 12.
§ *Life of St. Paul*, p. 195. ‖ 2 Tim. iv. 13.

hasty, forced departure, without time to collect his books and clothing. As for the cause of the arrest, it is significant that *in the next verse* Paul writes: "Alexander the coppersmith* hath done me much evil . . . he hath greatly withstood our words. *At my first answer* no man stood with me; but all forsook me. May it not be laid to their charge! But the Lord stood by me . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." His "*first*" answer or defence probably took place in Ephesus, the residence of the Roman governor of the province. At this first hearing he was acquitted, but Alexander and his many other enemies in Ephesus doubtless renewed their attack and finally succeeded.

Accordingly, the weary veteran was again sent to Rome, this time to meet his death. There is something very pathetic in the lonely old man's appeal from Rome to Timothy in the second Epistle written shortly before his martyrdom: "Only Luke is with me! Take Mark and bring him with thee . . . Erastus remained at Corinth. Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. *Make haste to come before winter!*"†

Did Timothy reach him in time before Paul's execution? We do not know.

* * * * * *

I have digressed for a moment from the consideration of St. Peter to the fate of his colleague, St. Paul, because they are continually mentioned together in Rome, particularly in connection with the catacombs. Their names are also closely associated in the liturgy of the Church. In the Confiteor or Confession of sin, which every Catholic—Pope, priest or layman—is obliged to repeat at Mass, it is significant that the names of "the holy apostles Peter and Paul" are twice united. And it is not forgotten that if Paul has been justly entitled "The Apostle to the Gentiles," Peter had already been the first to bring into the Church the Gentile centurion, Cornelius, and his household; and, by a vision, vouchsafed to him alone, had been convinced that he might thenceforth consider no man unclean or unworthy of baptism.

Rome is for ever hallowed by the traditions and memories of their ministry and martyrdom, and like perennial ivy, growing over massive walls, some charming legends of St. Peter's sojourn here especially entwine themselves about the monumental evidences of his Roman life. One of these is of course the well-known beautiful story of "Domine, quo vadis?" associated with the church of that name on the Appian Way, about two miles from Rome. Is the legend based upon reality? It does not greatly matter. There are legends

* Acts xix. 33; 1 Tim. i. 20. † 2 Tim. iv.

which, in their spiritual significance and adaptation to the genius of the place, seem truer than a volume of attested facts.

So awe-inspiring and exalted are these two Princes of the Church, that it is almost comforting to us poor mortals to recollect that even they had been grievous sinners before they became great saints. Peter had thrice denied his Lord: and Paul, as a fanatical Pharisee, had fiercely persecuted the infant Church. But what glorious examples of the grace of God they became, when, purified by tears of repentance, they set themselves to counteract as far as possible the evil of the past! St. Peter, after the day of Pentecost, is scarcely recognizable, so thoroughly is he changed from the timorous disciple to the bold apostle: and St. Paul's first question after his conversion on the road to Damascus was: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Had the answer to this question been given him at once in all its plenitude, even such a man as Paul might well have been dismayed. It would have informed him that he was to preach the new religion and to establish churches everywhere among the Gentiles; and, when this once done, was to write to them, visit them, and supervise them. His primal duty was *to fill the Greco-Roman world with the knowledge of Christ crucified*, whose followers He himself had persecuted. He had also epistles to compose, journeys to make, scourgings to receive, imprisonments to endure, miracles to perform, continual prayers to offer for himself and others, converts to make to the Faith, and finally to die a martyr's death. The fate of coming centuries, the destiny of millions hung upon his words and deeds. We gaze, amazed, on such achievements.

Not a legend, however, but an historically established fact is the circumstance that St. Peter was crucified in Rome and, according to immemorial tradition, head downwards, since he considered it too great an honour for him to be crucified like his Lord. The place was the notorious scene of Christian martyrdom, the Circus of Nero, which then occupied the site where now the glorious Church of St. Peter's and part of the Vatican stand. Even the exact spot where his cross stood is now known, for it was at the central point of the arena, midway between the two columns (*inter duas metas*), which marked the turning-points of the race-course, and at the foot of the great obelisk which Caligula had recently brought from Egypt.*

For many centuries the exact spot of St. Peter's execution was marked by a chapel, called the Chapel of the Crucifixion; and the great monolith was removed from that position to the centre of St. Peter's Square, where it now holds aloft triumphantly the Cross

* Lanciani, *ibid.* 127.

of Christ before the Church which bears the apostle's name. Even the coldest heart must feel emotion here, as one reflects that this memorial of the Pharaohs beheld the martyrdom of Peter, on what Renan calls: "The most solemn day in the history of Christianity since the day when Jesus died on Golgotha."

We can believe with greater certainty the fact that St. Peter actually did suffer martyrdom because of Christ's own solemn and beautiful prediction of it, recorded by John in the last chapter of his Gospel, where he describes how the risen Saviour conversed with His disciples on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias. On that occasion Jesus uttered *to Peter only* the following words: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and lead thee where thou wouldst not." Then St. John adds to Christ's words the following explanation: "And this He said, signifying by what death he (Peter) should glorify God." It is significant that after Jesus had spoken thus to Peter, He added: "Follow me." And Peter did follow Him, even to crucifixion.

It is evident that this recital by John of Christ's words to Peter was intended to show that the latter's martyrdom was something foreseen by our Lord, when He uttered the prediction, and also something *looked back upon by John* in his old age, as an accomplished fact, a prophecy fulfilled. Unfortunately, John does not mention the place of its fulfilment. Yet, after all, why should he have done so? He was not writing a history of Peter's life, but a record of Christ's words, and he doubtless took it for granted that everyone was well aware of the place where that martyrdom occurred.

* * * * * *

In regard to the tomb of the great apostle, formerly in the first basilica erected in his honour, Lanciani relates the following: "The Liber Pontificalis describes, among the gifts of Constantine, a cross of pure gold weighing one hundred and fifty pounds, which he placed over the gold lid of the coffin. The golden cross bore the following inscription: 'Constantine the emperor and Helena the empress have richly decorated this royal crypt and the basilica which shelters it.' If this precious object is there, the remains must *a fortiori* be there also. Here comes the decisive test. In the spring of 1594, while Giacomo della Porta was levelling the floor of the church above the Confession . . . the ground gave way, and he saw through the opening what nobody had beheld since the time of Sergius II, *the grave of St. Peter*, and upon it the golden cross of Constantine. On hearing of the discovery, Pope Clement VIII,

accompanied by Cardinals Bellarmine, Antoniano, and Sfrondato, descended to the Confession and with the help of a torch, which Giacomo della Porta had lowered into the hollow space below, could see with his own eyes and could show to his followers the cross inscribed with the names of Constantine and Helena. The impression produced upon the Pope by this wonderful sight was so great that he caused the opening to be closed at once. The event is attested not only by a manuscript deposition of Torrigio, but also by the present aspect of the place. The materials with which Clement VIII sealed the opening, and rendered the tomb once more invisible and inaccessible, can still be seen . . . below the altar."*

Certainly nothing more is needed to demonstrate the fact that St. Peter lived, laboured, and died in Rome, and that he was the founder and first Bishop of the Roman Church. But even if the documentary and traditional proofs had been lacking, the very soil of Rome would have disclosed the truth, for many ancient monuments confirm it, especially the more recent excavations under the Church of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way. These, taken in connection with the Liber Pontificalis, the Itineraries prepared for pilgrims in the early centuries, and numerous mural inscriptions establish the facts that the body of St. Peter was originally buried on the Vatican hill, where he was crucified, and that the body of St. Paul was originally buried near the place of his decapitation on the road to Ostia. There they reposed for nearly two hundred years. According to the statement of the priest Caius, about the year 200, the graves of the apostles were shown only on the Vatican and the Via Ostia.

It is now known beyond a reasonable doubt that in the year 258, during the persecution of the emperor Valerian (253–260), the relics of the two apostles were transferred from these, their first burial-places, to the catacombs of St. Sebastian, both for greater safety from the incursions of barbarians and because religious services could there be celebrated in their honour with safety and privacy.† There they remained for more than half a century. If it be asked why, after the cessation of the persecutions, the bodies of Peter and Paul were not brought back at once to their original graves, the answer is that, at the beginning of Constantine's reign, the two basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul were already in process of construction, and it was in these noble churches that their bodies were to lie.‡ Upon the walls of the excavated area under the Church of Saint Sebastian can be seen many *graffiti* scratched by pilgrims, showing that this

* Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, pp. 149–150.
† Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paul in Rom*, 122.
‡ *Ibid.*, 125.

temporary resting-place of both these apostles was greatly venerated. There has been also found here an ancient stairway, leading down to a deep burial vault, excavated in the soft rock, and here are more of such *graffiti*, invoking the aid of Peter and Paul, such as "*Petre et Paule, habete nos in mente!*"

Not only is the year of the transfer of the apostolic relics hither now known, but the precise date (June 29) is also practically certain; for in ancient allusions to the event this date is mentioned, and ever afterwards that day was celebrated. Before the year 258, one finds no trace of any celebration of the apostles at their original graves, but thereafter in the catacombs and later in the two basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, when the sacred relics had been placed in their new tombs, the celebration inaugurated at Saint Sebastian's became habitual in the Roman Church.

These facts are still further attested by an inscription composed by Pope Damasus (366–384), and erected on the hallowed spot where the bodies of Peter and Paul were temporarily preserved. Near the crypt of the present church of Saint Sebastian is seen the imperfect copy of this inscription, the text of which has fortunately come down to us in several mediæval manuscripts. It is as follows: "You who inquire after the names of Paul and Peter, know that *here these saints reposed in ancient times.* The Orient sent us the apostles . . . but on account of their bloody martyrdom Rome has won the right to claim them as her citizens."

The *Salzburg Itinerary*, composed in the seventh century for visitors to Rome, says very clearly: "Next you come, on the Appian Way, to the Church of the martyr St. Sebastian, whose body lies beneath it. There are also the graves of the apostles Peter and Paul, in which they reposed forty years."

The same work says: "Behind the church are the catacombs, in which there is a crypt, where the bodies of the apostles Peter and Paul were concealed."

* * * * * *

But perhaps some non-Catholic will ask here: "Why have you taken so much trouble to prove the primacy of Peter and his presence in Rome? It means nothing to us."

That is easily understood in the case of the agnostic, the atheist, and the neo-pagan. To them the fact that Peter lived in Rome, as the founder and first Bishop of its Church, and died there as a martyr, is doubtless a matter of no importance. For even the historical existence of Christ Himself upon this earth does not especially interest them. Some of them tell us frankly that they are more attracted to Buddha than to Jesus, because they "like the

smiling statues of the Eastern sage better than the sorrowful figure on the crucifix!"

But to sincere, non-Catholic, Christian believers, who profess their faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and are convinced that He died to redeem humanity, was buried, rose again on the third day, and now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead—the fate of the great apostle on whom Christ conferred such power cannot be a matter of indifference. And if they recognize the commission given him by Christ as genuine, are they consistent in refusing to acknowledge, as the Church's spiritual head, the authorized successor of that Peter, to whom incarnate God confided its direction? Do they say, however, that Christ's commission and bestowal of power were intended for *Peter only?* But would not that arrangement have been equivalent to laying the foundation of His Church without providing for the superstructure? When the commanding general falls in battle, some duly accredited officer must supersede him, on whom the authority and responsibility shall rest. Now, in this case, Peter, the man, was mortal. He was to pass away in a few years, crucified like his Master. Who, then, was to replace him? Someone certainly had to do so. The helm of the Barque of St. Peter could not be left without a helmsman, nor the Church without its ultimate source of authority. Father Joseph Rickaby, S.J., in a recent article entitled "Tu es Petrus," said: "Without the Papacy, there is no safeguarding of any article of Christian Faith, not even the divinity of Christ. *Disintegration of dogma sets in everywhere where the Pope is not.*"*

This incisive statement may shock non-Catholics at first, yet it is literally, logically, and historically true. Where else than in the ancient Church governed by "Peter" can be found to-day identical, authoritative teaching? One has but to survey the present doctrinal chaos prevailing in Christendom to see that there is no unity of dogma and no authority outside of the ancient, indivisible Church of the apostles, the one, united, indestructible depositary of a changeless creed.

Such being the case, it is evident that Catholics who believe in that God-appointed, authoritative Church cannot compromise with those who do not believe in it. However desirable the union of all denominations of Christians may be, Catholics cannot, like the leaders of political parties, debate about a common platform, and bargain as to which of the apostolic dogmas and sacraments shall be retained and which shall be abandoned.

From time to time the various sects of Christendom, alarmed at

* *Thought*, December, 1927.

the increasing danger of disintegration, have convoked councils of their representatives, to find, if possible, some formula of unity.

One such assembly met, in 1927, at Lausanne. The Roman Catholic Church was officially invited to participate in its sessions, but declined. Why did it not accept the invitation? Let us seek an answer to that question in the next chapter.

Chapter X

WHY ROME COULD NOT GO TO LAUSANNE

"Protestantism has descended to the point where all positive doctrine disappears, and where it is impossible to draw a boundary between itself and free-thought.

"The inevitable outcome of Protestantism is the disappearance of dogma and all precise faith."

EYMIEU.

SWITZERLAND is the land of conferences. Its city of Geneva is to-day the seat of the League of Nations, and was, in 1863, the cradle of the Red Cross; another of its cities was recently the meeting-place of the convention of Locarno, and, besides many other deliberative assemblies, there was held at Geneva, in 1872, the council of arbitration, which decided differences arising between the United States and England during America's Civil War. In Switzerland also met, in 1928, in the city of Lausanne, a "world" theological conference of non-Catholics on "Faith and Order." How much faith and how much order resulted from it, or could result from it, will be subsequently seen.

There were present at this conference about five hundred delegates from something like a hundred different Churches, sects, and groups of Christians, notably in England, Scotland, Wales, the United States, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, and India. There were also representatives of the Eastern Greek Church.

The object of this gathering was the long-desired unification of all Christians in one Church. No aim could be nobler and none more completely in harmony with the wish of the Saviour expressed on the eve of His betrayal in the memorable words: "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee."*

This conference, like all its predecessors, failed to agree on any basis for such unity. The word "predecessors" used here may excite surprise; for many newspapers treated this attempt as if it were a novelty. Yet this endeavour on the part of Protestants is nothing

* John xvii.

new. In reality, no theological ecclesiastical movement has had more precedents in the last four hundred years.

* * * * * *

The reason for this is obvious. From the very beginning, Protestantism, acting on its essential principle of the right of private judgement and individual interpretation of Scripture and doctrine, began to disintegrate into various creeds and Churches; and, as this baneful work went on, sober-minded Christians naturally grew alarmed. In their lack of unity and in the incessant multiplication of their sects they saw a fatal weakness and sought to remedy it. But this sad tendency, ineradicably located in Protestantism, could not be checked. Luther himself complained that there were "almost as many systems as preachers." * Each separate group promulgated its individual creed in one of those "Confessions of Faith" which sprang up over night like mushrooms, till their number formed a veritable scandal. Among these were the Confessions of Augsburg, Strasburg, Basel (two in number), Frankfort, England, Scotland, France, Switzerland (five in number), and those of Worms, Dordrecht, Poland, the Palatinate, Bohemia, and many more. Some of the *Credos* differed from one another on the most important doctrinal points, and were defended and disputed with a fury of invective and vituperation unsurpassed in history. In this respect the diatribes of Luther were the coarsest of them all, as his letters, table-talk, and biography abundantly prove. For many years the rapidly increasing Churches were kept busy anathematizing and excommunicating one another.

"It is very important," wrote Calvin to Melancthon, "that no suspicion of the divisions which exist among us should become known to future centuries; for it is inconceivably ridiculous that, having broken with everybody else, we should have been so unable to agree among ourselves since the beginning of our Reformation."

As time went on, this inter-ecclesiastical vituperation grew less bitter, but the division and subdivision of the Protestants continued. One of their pastors, Athanasius Coquerel,† wrote of this tendency: "The passion for confessions of faith has become a veritable mania; and it has been wittily said that if three Protestants should find themselves stranded on a desert island, the first would immediately draw from his pocket a confession of faith and try to come to an understanding about it with the second, in order to impose it on the third."

Warning voices were often raised against this suicidal policy,

* Döllinger, III. 210.

† A. Coquerel, Jr., *La Conscience et la Foi*, Paris, 1867, p. 156.

and countless sermons have been preached, hymns written and appeals been made to work for Christian unity. The Popes of Rome have been especially conspicuous in prayer and precept to this end. But all in vain. The principle and practice of private judgement, including the right to protest, to separate and to found new Churches for the most trivial reasons, have steadily prevailed since Luther's time, and still prevail.

We have recently heard much of Modernists and Fundamentalists, but this is also nothing new. The hope has frequently been entertained among non-Catholics that Christian unity could be achieved by making a distinction between fundamental dogmas and non-essential dogmas. The former every Christian was to believe or jeopardize his soul's salvation; the latter could be either believed or not, just as one liked.

As was inevitable, however, the question was immediately raised: Which dogmas of the Christian revelation are "fundamental" and which are "non-essential"? Who should decide? Almost everyone took a hand at it. Erasmus named some, Luther others, Calvin others still. The fantasies of their disciples were astonishing. Some thought the Apostles' Creed to be fundamental; others the Lord's Prayer; some wanted both; others wanted neither; many preferred certain texts from the Bible or articles from this or that confession. In the last century, M. Guizot proposed the following as fundamental, sufficient, and necessary: A belief in Creation, in Providence, in Original Sin, in the Incarnation, and in Redemption. But some of the Protestant groups would not accept Original Sin; and others found that the dogmas of the Incarnation and Redemption were no longer popular and even unnecessary, if there were no Original Sin. Finally, one conference agreed upon two fundamentals—Creation and Providence. But even on these points unanimity could not be obtained. Some could not quite believe in an overruling Providence, and others preferred Haeckel's theory to that of a creation.*

Like Archimedes, the delegates feverishly seek a common point of leverage, from which to move the world, but find none. Their long discussions are wearisome and sterile. The fragments, cut from the seamless robe of Christ by Luther and his followers, cannot so easily be sewed together again to form a perfect garment.

And so it has gone on. Many conferences have been held; but still there is no unity. The utterances of Lausanne are only an echo of the voices of the past. Every time a conference meets, more concessions are made and more and more dogmas are thrown overboard, to minimize the chances of dissension. But with no real result.

* See Eymieu, *Deux Arguments pour le Catholicisme*, p. 196.

At present, as Indifferentism and Rationalism grow dominant, the tendency is to say that there are no fundamental or essential dogmas. In fact, the aim of Modernism is to volatilize the Christian doctrines into an atmosphere so thin that all can breathe it.

It is claimed that the Unified Church of the future must be broad enough to admit practically everyone who "thinks religiously," no matter what his theological views may be.

Prof. Kirsopp Lake is quoted by Rev. Francis Woodlock, S.J., in his admirable study of *Modernism and the Christian Church*, p. 26, as saying: "The Church of the future will not require, as a condition of membership, that we should accept any opinion about Jesus, *not even his own!*"

The same author quotes, on p. 33 of the above-mentioned work, the following from the *American Ecclesiastical Review* of October, 1900, p. 396: "A few years ago a manifesto on the Incarnation, stating the Divinity of Christ in explicit language, was prepared by a committee of Bishops of the American Episcopal Church. This, when presented to Bishop Potter, he refused to sign, "*lest future generations might be hampered in their freedom of belief.*"

This justifies the declaration of the Protestant pastor Fulliquet that "Dogma in the Protestant Church is subject to continual revision."*

* * * * * *

This sort of thing opens the door to Deists, Theosophists, Buddhists, Bahaists, Jews, Mohammedans, etc. etc., and possibly even to Atheists, for they might enter it under the name of Pantheists. In order to accommodate them all, the entrance tests are made astonishingly simple. We may suppose the following conversation to take place between applicants and examiners:

"I do not think that Jesus was the Son of God."

"Are you willing, like the Rev. R. Parsons,† to admit that he was 'a Palestine Jew worthy of all respect'? If so, pass in."

"I don't believe a miracle ever took place."

"It will be a miracle if only that keeps you out. Go right in."

"I can't believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ."

"Well, we won't be hard on you. Pass in; plenty of people like you are down in front."

"I doubt the doctrine of the resurrection; once dead, always dead."

"Go in just the same and take a seat among the dead heads."

"I'm a Materialist."

"That is immaterial. You can pass."

* *Précis d'histoire des dogmes*, p. 215.

† D'Herbigny, *Anglicanisme et Orthodoxie*, p. 77.

"I don't believe in a personal devil."

"Perhaps you have never looked in a looking-glass. Anyway, there are many like you. Go in."

"I do not believe the Christian creed; may I come into the Universal Church?"

"But you are a clergyman; don't you recite the Creed every Sunday?"

"Yes, but I put my own interpretation on the words. It is a mere formality."

"All right. Go into the proscenium box, where some bishops are sitting. You can't miss it. Over the front of it are the words: 'Creeds are made to conceal thoughts.'"

"I am in favour of divorce and companionate marriages. I think that Jesus was too old-fashioned to suit this age!"

"We have reserved the entire gallery for people like you. Sorry I can't give you a seat up there. Standing room only."

"I agree with Edmond Stapfer, who says: 'Let us believe *in* Jesus, but let us not be *like* Jesus.'* May I enter your Church of the Future?"

"I should say so! That will suit most of us perfectly. We can believe what we want to about Him, and *need not be like Him.* What a comfort! Go right in. You will get a seat among the prophets."

"I am just a plain Deist."

"You look the part. You are welcome."

"I say, with Stapfer: 'Let us abandon in particular the error that the *truth* of religious beliefs is essential for the Christian.' May I join you?"†

"Sir, you are more than welcome. If we do not have to bother about the *truth* of our religious beliefs, we shall have a membership that will stagger the Catholics."

If this is a parody, it borders very closely on the truth. The Church of the future is to have as light a doctrinal outfit as possible. The larger the Church, the fewer dogmas can be kept. The logical result will be to believe everything or nothing. There will be an elimination of all positive faith.

A Protestant theologian, Nicholas Harms, said already in the last century: "I could write on my thumb-nail all that remains of the dogmas universally believed in the Protestant Church."‡

A Catholic theologian, who has resided for many years in Switzerland, recently told me that the great majority of Evangelical ministers in that country do not believe in the divinity of Christ and in very

* Edmond Stapfer, *Jesus Christ pendant son ministère*, 1897.

† Paul Stapfer, *L'inquiétude religieuse*, p. 131.

‡ Quoted by Alzog, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1855. Vol. III. 580.

little else of the old creed. His statement has been confirmed frequently by others. Some of them are said to have no faith in the immortality of the soul. The same can be said of the land of Luther. Already in 1893, the Protestant pastor at Karlsruhe, M. Langin, publicly denied the divinity of Christ. He had formed part of the general synod of Baden, and ninety-nine Baden theologians addressed to him their public approval.*

Dr. Emil Rasmussen affirms that "in Protestant countries one-half of the theological professorial chairs are occupied by men who no longer believe in the divinity of Jesus."† It is said that there are now only two Protestant theological Faculties in Germany where the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is taught.‡ Prof. W. Krüger declares that the vocation of theological instructors is to destroy the faith of youthful students and to cause scandal!"§

In the Anglican Church it is well known that there are all varieties of belief and unbelief, and that these are not only tolerated, but defended by many of its Bishops in its High, Low, Broad and Anglo-Catholic divisions. "The Church of England," said the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, "is a comprehensive Church. It includes men of every opinion, from those who deny its first principles absolutely, to those who maintain the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, which it has expressly condemned."||

In the congress of the Anglican Modern *Churchmen* at Girton College, Cambridge, in 1921, three of their speakers denied catagorically the divinity of Christ.¶

The *Church Times* of January 18, 1923, says: "Surely Dean Inge's experience has long ago taught him that a highly placed and paid dignitary of the Church of England may hold and proclaim any beliefs he likes with absolute safety and impunity."**

Such utterances could be cited indefinitely. What wonder that the Bishop of Durham (a pronounced Modernist) declares: "The Church of England is the most divided of all Churches."

Although it is evident that individual private judgement is opposed to Unity, Harnack, the great exponent of Protestantism in Germany, prefers this state of things! He says: "If the objection is made to us, 'You are divided; you have as many doctrines as members'; we shall reply: 'That is true, but *we do not wish it to*

* See Goyau, *Allemagne réligieuse—Le Protestantisme* (Paris, 1908), p. 150.

† Rasmussen, *Jesus . . . eine Studie* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 158.

‡ Goyau, *ibid.*, Chaps. II. and III.

§ Philipp Huppert, *Der deutsche Protestantismus zu Beginn des XX Jahrhunderts* (Köln, 1902), p. 22.

|| Quoted in the *Nouvelles religieuses*, April 15, 1921, p. 182.

¶ *Nouvelles religieuses*, October 15, 1921, p. 473, and November 15, p. 522.

** *In Defence of the Church of England*, p. 96.

be otherwise. On the contrary, we desire still more liberty, still more individualism in faith or its expression.' "*

The Bishop who represented Swedish Protestantism at Lausanne also said explicitly: "We desire a *many-sided* unity. We do not even think that uniformity is profitable to the Church!" (Report in the *Journal de Genève*).

This view is, of course, supported by the Modernists in general, for they wish to have no united, homogeneous teaching body, no ultimate authority and no supreme court of appeal.

The Roman Catholic Church, on the contrary, wise from her long experience of 1500 years before a Protestant sect ever came into existence, wants *precisely what the others so lightly reject, namely, unity and authority, and claims to transmit the Revelation of Christ and to interpret it, neither taking anything from it nor adding anything to it.* Here, therefore, are two absolutely irreconcilable standpoints.

* * * * * *

And yet the aim of the recent conference at Lausanne was, according to the Bishop of Upsala, Sweden, precisely to find and to agree upon a common confession of faith for the Churches. But already in its fourth session, Dr. Zöllner, Protestant delegate from Germany, declared that, on the contrary, the task of the conference was *not* to find formulas for new confessions of faith, for such attempts tended only to increase the confusion. How indeed is it possible, for example, for a Christian who believes that Jesus Christ was the incarnate Son of God to find a bond of unity with a man who believes Him to have been at best "a Palestinian Jew worthy of all respect," or with another who considers Him to have been a sentimentalist or a madman?

Perhaps the only sentiment on which most of the delegates at Lausanne could have agreed, was one already expressed by the Protestant theologian, Ernest Troeltsch, at the Church Congress of Mannheim in 1914: "To-day, in regard to doctrines, they (the Protestants) know positively and exactly only one thing, namely, *that they are not Catholics.*"†

Nevertheless, much of the former bitterness against the Church of Rome has disappeared among well-informed Protestants.

In the session of August 7, at Lausanne, Bishop Manning of New York, declared: "We all regret deeply that the Roman Catholic Church has not thought it best to accept the invitation which was addressed to her, to send her representatives to the conference. Nevertheless, we wish that she should know that our sentiments

* Harnack, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 328.
† Cf. Eymieu, p. 213.

towards her are those of love and friendship. We recognize that Christian unity will be attained only when our brethren of the Roman Catholic Church shall unite with us. . . . From this assembly we send the expression of our hope that our Catholic brethren will unite their prayers with ours that in this conference we may be guided by Him who prayed that we should be only one fold."

Kind and noble words; but the points of view of those heterogeneous sects and that of the Roman Catholic Church are so radically different as to make an effective participation of that Church in the Lausanne conference impossible.

The principle animating all the delegates to that assembly was the one most characteristic of Protestantism, namely, the right of private, individual judgement. This means, in the last analysis, that one can believe what one likes and can interpret the Bible as one chooses, and this of course ends in disintegration and disunion. The tendency of the advocates of the "Church of the Future" is to discard all creeds, or to retain them only as obsolete forms of thought. Modernist prelates, who are unwilling to leave their well-paid ecclesiastical positions, affirm their belief in the Creed, as it stands in the Prayer Book, and *on the same day* in the pulpit deny belief in that Creed! This is not a feat of *leger de main* but of *leger de langue*. They call what they are doing "progress," and so it might conceivably be named, if anything better was thereby gained. But these Modernists begin the same vain repetition—"I believe" and "I do not believe"—over again on the following Sunday with the regularity of a pendulum. It resembles the action of a captive squirrel in his revolving cage—for ever galloping but getting nowhere.

The Catholic Church will have none of these mummeries. She refuses to nullify a single one of the articles of her immemorial creed, and regards them all as the inspired expressions of a living Faith.

To have accepted the invitation to participate in this latest of so many efforts to achieve ecclesiastical unity would have been to consent to haggle about her doctrines and to chaffer over creeds, in other words, to prove faithless to her trust. Hence she replied: *Non possumus.*

* * * * * *

"Catholicism is fifteen hundred years older than Protestantism," says Eymieu, "and on its human side it has been subjected to the same perils as Protestantism, and even to still greater ones, peculiar to itself. But one fact is clear as sunlight. *Its doctrine has not crumbled into fragments* under the shocks of discussion and tempestuous winds."

Protestantism, however, began immediately to crumble into

pieces, and has continued to crumble ever since; and now the corrosive acid of Modernism will dissolve it still more.

Other conferences for the establishment of Christian unity will no doubt be held in other cities than Lausanne, but each succeeding one will find the solution of the problem still more difficult, for the sects will be more numerous and their wishes more divergent. The system holds within itself the germ of its own decomposition. Protestantism to-day is in a state of progressive dissolution. There is a nemesis in the fate which awaits the manifold progeny of Luther. Nor is it undeserved. Christ solemnly promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to teach and to guide His Church, so that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. Catholics believe that He has kept that promise. Protestants cannot believe it; for, if the Roman Catholic Church had already become in the sixteenth century hopelessly corrupt, Christ had *not* kept His promise, or else the Holy Spirit had not been efficacious. Are Protestants prepared to say that? If not, and if the Church had then required *moral* reformation only and not *doctrinal*, what right had Luther and his followers to leave the Mother Church, to which alone Christ's promises and sacraments had been given? How dared they, on their own responsibility, set up another Church—and subsequently hundreds of other Churches—deciding by a variety of private judgements which of the original apostolic sacraments and doctrines they would retain and which reject?

* * * * * *

An interesting question here presents itself: Are most of the delegates to these conferences for Christian unity really Christians? The query is not an idle one, nor is it prompted by bigotry or malice. It is based on logic and reason. Christ claimed repeatedly to be the Son of God and appealed to His miracles to substantiate that claim. For making that assertion He was condemned to death. He never retracted it. *If what He said* 1900 *years ago was true, it is true to-day.*

Now it is probable, if not certain, that most of the members of the Lausanne assembly had, to say the least, serious doubts about the divinity of Christ, and did not believe that He ever wrought a miracle, including that of His own resurrection. How, then, can they legitimately call themselves Christians? To deny Christ's positive claim to be the Son of God and to repudiate His miracles, which He adduced as proofs of His divine birthright, is to deny and to repudiate Christ Himself. And, since Jesus said distinctly: "He that is not with Me is against Me," how can those who refuse to recognize anything supernatural in His nature and mission, rightfully hold a place in the Church He founded?

Strauss admitted this frankly and declared that he and his fellow-

Rationalists were not Christians. He said: "It is my conviction that, if we do not wish to act evasively, and if we are willing to give up saying merely 'Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay,' we must confess that we are no longer Christians."* The Rationalists, Von Hartmann† and Overbeck,‡ say the same. Politically, of course, all those who live in countries where the Christian religion predominates are loosely styled "Christians." But these may include Mohammedans, Jews, Bahaists, Atheists, and unbelievers of every variety. It is true, many who cling to the name "Christian" through tradition and sentiment maintain that they have a right to it, because they at least revere and believe in Jesus as a man, and even as the best of men. But is that sufficient to justify their use of it? *Jesus claimed to be more than a man.* He claimed to be the Son of God and based His religion on that fact. This divinity the Modernists deny. If, therefore, Jesus possessed a human nature *only*, they are admiring and revering either an impostor or a man mentally deranged.

Rev. Francis Woodlock, S.J.,§ states the matter clearly and irrefutably: "The Godhead of Christ, the Eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who existed, before He became Incarnate, and who was still God, as the Babe of Bethlehem, is the rock foundation of the Christian faith, and the Catholic Church exists to teach that truth to-day."

No man has a right to the name Christian who gives the extreme Modernist answer to the question: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" If asked: "Is Modernism Christian?" I unhesitatingly reply: "No. Unitarian, if you will, *but not Christian.*"

* * * * * *

To-day these two powerful religious bodies, cohesive Catholicism and segregated Protestantism, stand confronting each other with different and apparently irreconcilable ideals and conceptions.

Protestantism is negative, discordant, and disintegrating. Catholicism is positive, harmonious, and united. The reason why the Roman Catholic Church is so disliked is precisely her possession of those qualities. The non-Catholics know her strength (numerically 300,000,000), they covet her unity, they recognize their own weakness and disunion. They ruefully contemplate their now half-empty churches and contrast them with those of the Catholics, crowded to the doors not only once, but many times on every Sunday and Holy Day. The evident fact of her devotion also amazes them. The magnificent immutability of her doctrine awes them. They envy

* *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 26.

† *Die Krisis des Christentums in der modernen Theologie.*

‡ *Ueber die Christlichkeit unserer Theologie*, 1903. 2nd edition.

§ *Modernism and the Christian Church*, p. 73.

her and fear her; and fear and envy beget hatred. Still, *they must come to her* if they desire universal Christian unity, for she will never yield.

The advocates of the proposed Unified Church are not disturbed at thought of a possible dissolution of the Church of England or of any other individual body of Christians, provided they can gain their object. This object is an amalgamation of all Christian bodies at the price of mutual concessions in regard to dogmas, including the banishment of them all, if possible. To achieve that aim, many are willing to abandon belief in all the supernatural elements of Christ's Person and Revelation, His miracles, His pre-existent life with the Father, His redemption and His divinity!

But on none of these points can the Roman Catholic Church ever compromise. The Confession of Faith, expressed in the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, is unchangeable. Those Creeds she has held intact throughout the centuries and she will hold them inviolable while the world shall last.

She therefore replied in substance to Bishop Manning and his colleagues at Lausanne: "Why should we go as delegates to your conference? We cannot diminish, modify, or increase by one iota the truth entrusted by our Lord and the Apostles to the Church, of which the original Bishop was Peter. *That Church is ours*—the only body of Christians which has existed in continuous succession since the apostolic age, preserving the same faith, believing the same creed, receiving the same sacraments, and using the same prayers in a universal language, at all times and in every portion of the world."

From this impregnable position the Catholic Church—unmoved amid the increase or the dissolution of unnumbered sects—can never recede. Those who desire Christian unity will not find it in those groups of restless, self-tormented souls, which seek it in despondency and disband in despair; but only in that Mother Church which has triumphed over two millenniums of enemies; the Church of countless saints and martyrs; the Church which converted Europe and America from paganism and barbarism; the Church which the Son of God, who founded it, solemnly promised to abide with till the end of time.

Chapter XI

FROM MY PORTFOLIO

"Yea, in Thy life our little lives are ended;
Into Thy depths our trembling spirits fall;
In Thee enfolded, gathered, comprehended,
As holds the sea her waves, Thou hold'st us all."

SCUDDER.

DURING the last twelve years I have had many conversations and a large correspondence with men much wiser than myself. A proof of this is the fact that they sometimes did not share my views. I always meant eventually to fashion out of these discussions and correspondence a Symposium, excluding from it, of course, any allusions to international politics and the war.

But somehow I kept on postponing it to a more convenient season, putting my letters and the notes I sometimes made of our interviews into a portfolio for future reference. And now I find myself the sole survivor of the little group!

Still, as I sit before my fire and give now one and then another faded leaflet to the flames, I find that some of them—especially those pertaining to religious subjects—are not deserving of cremation. Alas! I cannot ask the permission of their writers to publish extracts from their letters or notes from our conversations, over their names, or even anonymously, although I think the request would not have been refused.

Hence I am moved to take them from their resting-place and to include a few of them in a chapter of this volume, in the hope that they may seem to others as suggestive as they do to me.

I have divided the ideas thus exchanged among a group of three, although its actual composition was a larger one; and now that it is done, I do not know, as I re-read it, how much of this miscellaneous compilation was the contribution of my comrades and how much was mine. But that is unimportant.

"What matter I, or they,
Mine, or another's day,
So the right word be said?"

On the Mystery of Life

Arnold. "O the mystery of this unintelligible existence! For whatever other purpose we were put into this world, it certainly was not for the satisfaction of our intellectual curiosity. Those who labour longest and hardest are, in the end, the least satisfied, because the sum of their knowledge consists in the perception of its limitations. The higher we ascend, the broader becomes the horizon. For purposes of research and investigation, our intellectual faculties seem boundless, but the *solution of the root-problems of God, the Ideal, the Mystery of life and eternity*, ever elude us.

"There is always a beyond, a something we cannot grasp. Appeals to science evoke no permanently satisfying answer; the solution is not there, for science has never spoken, and will never speak, her last word.

"In my youth, agnosticism was fashionable, and American audiences roared over Ingersoll's witticisms at the expense of Moses and his mistakes.

"Science, in those days, denied the immortality of man; but nowadays it affirms the immortality of matter, and we are told that there is and can be no such thing as annihilation."

Father X. "No doubt you have observed that belief in a spirit-world, formerly regarded as a joke or the resource of charlatans, is now very popular, and learned societies exist for the purpose of establishing communication with the Supernatural! But from the efforts of the best known adepts in psychical research there has come nothing more illuminating or convincing than commonplace platitudes, incoherent rappings, table-tippings and similar demonstrations, not one of which seems to deserve the attention of serious people."

Ernest. "I have always been a devoted friend of dogs and would like to believe that I shall meet again in a future life the noble animals I have dearly loved, but I should think myself demented if I found a *proof* of it in the words of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who, in reply to a *questionnaire:* 'Do dogs live in the Beyond?' is quoted as saying: 'I have heard the séance-room filled with the barking of dogs, and they have occasionally appeared in psychic photographs! All our pets of *every sort* are with us in the next life.' Sir Oliver Lodge also gave to the inquiry a 'strongly affirmative reply.'"

Arnold. "If I am not mistaken, proofs of cigarette-smoking in the future life have also been forthcoming from these sources! Is it not almost incredible that persons who refuse to believe in the recorded miracles performed by Christ can base their conviction of animal immortality on the barking of dogs 'in the Beyond,' heard in a séance-room? All this groping in the darkness of the tombs for the fingers, whispers, and tappings of questionable ghosts has always

seemed to me either an immense delusion, or at best so unsatisfactory that I have refused to turn my back upon the Light of the World, to wander in such unwholesome twilights. If more knowledge of the future life than that which Christ revealed had been good for us, we doubtless should have received it. Meanwhile many of those who dabble in these mysteries become insane, and knaves make fortunes from their dupes."

Ernest. "With the problems of man's origin and descent, science does not seem to have advanced much farther. It is true, biology, geology, craniology, and other kindred sciences have made most interesting discoveries, and the former conceptions of chronology have had to be radically revised; but, although some of the learned men engaged in these researches are frankly anti-Christian, and seem to pursue their labours for the purpose of finding something to invalidate the Christian religion, I have not heard that they have succeeded. These gentlemen and their disciples remind me of a crowd of hostile schoolboys engaged in throwing stones at the schoolhouse; every now and then they are joined by some truant from within and the fusillade begins anew; sometimes a stone hits a window and cracks a pane of glass, whereupon a delirious cheer of victory goes up, and the assailants expect to see the entire edifice fall in ruins. Soon, however, their hopes are dashed, and the most that happens is that the detested schoolmaster comes to a window, looks out, estimates the damage, and gives directions for the repairs. Excuse this bit of imagery. You are doubtless more familiar with the results of recent scientific research than I am, but I believe that if anything really threatening the Catholic position had been found, I should have heard of it."

Father X. "One salient fallacy, it seems to me, is to argue from the bones, skulls, and fossilized skeletons of primitive, or rather of prehistoric man, that all the earth's inhabitants of that period must have been of precisely the same type. It would be neither safe nor scientific to so do even in our own age, since the range between the highest and the lowest types of living men to-day is very great. Were the imaginary Martian to attempt to reconstruct the earth's present inhabitants from the skulls, say, of an Australian Bushman, an African dwarf, and a native of Tierra del Fuego, he would certainly reach fallacious conclusions. He would never guess from them the existence of Newton, Goethe, Napoleon, or Cardinal Newman—possibly not even that of Woodrow Wilson!

"The much criticized Book of Genesis disposes of this vast subject in a few verses, meagre enough and not over-lucid. Whether the author had nothing further to communicate, or whether he felt that these somewhat vague generalities concerning the sequence of creation were all that were necessary, we know not."

Arnold. "Of course, the literal interpretation of the word 'day' as indicating a period of twenty-four hours, has long since been abandoned, and at no cost to Orthodoxy, since the Catholic Church never pronounced thereon. That man, the highest product of creation, appeared last of all in this account of Genesis, and only when the Earth was ready for his habitation, contradicts no scientific discovery of which I have ever heard."

Father X. "The Church does teach that man was created in a perfect state, and I see nothing incredible or repugnant to reason in the affirmation. The various theories of transition from an ape-like ancestor to man are speculative, and rest upon no proven facts. The earliest known vestiges of man and the Neanderthal remains, etc., show that he was, at that remote period, as far removed from any known simian creature as are we to-day. There is not merely one 'missing link,' but a long chain of them, and the lowest type of man is so far removed from the highest type of animal as to have little in common with it, save some features of physical structure; whereas all creatures in the human state do possess a common identity tending to prove a common origin. In any case, the solution of these problems will not be found in the Bible, nor has the Catholic Church done more than define the *initial fact of a common origin* in the Adamic ancestor, who forfeited his highest gift by the sin of disobedience. The Church's doors are wide and ever open, but those who will not enter until every scientific and historical difficulty is settled to their entire satisfaction, are likely to remain outside."

On the Crucifix of Limpias

Arnold. "What was your most enjoyable experience in Spain?"

Ernest. "My pilgrimage to Limpias."

Arnold. "I am ashamed to confess my ignorance, but just where is that town situated?"

Ernest. "About four hours distant from San Sebastian by motor-car."

Arnold. "A *pilgrimage* by motor?"

Ernest. "Why not? Despite this modern mode of transportation, I insist that it was a pilgrimage and not an excursion that I made, for I went in the true pilgrim spirit, which is, after all, what counts. There was a kind of fatality about it. Ever since I first heard, some two years ago, of this particular Crucifix, I felt certain that I should one day go there; just as now, having been, I feel sure I shall return thither."

Father X. "What of the place itself?"

Ernest. "It is charmingly located and seemed to me a spot of

exceptional beauty and tranquillity; for, although many people visit it, I was happily there when the number of strangers in the hamlet did not exceed a dozen, and they were chiefly English Catholics on a pilgrimage, whose presence was not disturbing."

Arnold. "And the Crucifix itself; is it beautiful?"

Ernest. "As a work of art, it is a marvel, but that had little or nothing to do with the impression it produced upon me. I entered the church with a feeling bordering upon dread, and when I first looked to see the Crucifix it was with apprehension. I did not go expecting to witness a miracle, and I feel convinced that a material manifestation would not have added to the impression produced upon me. But if I saw nothing else, I did see myself—not, perhaps, as others see me, certainly not as I should like to be seen, but as I fear I really am. When I left early the following morning, I felt immensely consoled and encouraged, as though I had left some of my burden behind me. It is not what one sees, but what one feels, that matters most. My spiritual life has been appallingly barren. I have been granted no visions and have had very few 'experiences,' but Limpias has filled the void, for I felt I had been very close to a direct source of special grace."

On the Use of the Crucifix

Arnold. "I went to-day to see a dying friend. He had almost reached the end of his *Via Dolorosa*, and we exchanged, so far as this world is concerned, a final farewell. Beside him lay a crucifix, which he had worn or carried on his person for many years. He told me he had asked for, and received, the promise that this faithful companion should be placed within his fingers, when cold in death, and should accompany him to the grave. Is that a custom common among Catholics?"

Father X. "It is almost universal, and is as beautiful as it is natural. The figure of our Lord is a well-nigh immemorial feature of the Mother Church. Its use goes back to at least the fifth century, and now we find it everywhere. The crucifix adorns our churches and cathedrals, it consecrates our altars, it greets us in innumerable fields and forest-paths in many Catholic lands, it hallows every Catholic home, it gives its silent benediction to our cemeteries, and it is worn by millions unobtrusively as an inseparable talisman. Why should one part with it, when one comes to die?"

Ernest. "I see no reason for doing so. On the contrary, what is more fitting than that this reminder of a dying God, who gave Himself for our salvation, should never leave us, even in death; especially since it recalls to us the fact that Jesus also was buried in a sepulchre,

yet rose from it triumphant? Not that it there can benefit in any way our senseless clay, or that the latter can be conscious of its presence. But to the dying Christian there is something comforting in the thought that the dear image will remain with him beyond the last farewells of loved ones, and will linger in his unrelaxing hands, for ever joined, as if in prayer."

Arnold. "Does either of you understand how anyone can look upon the cherishing of this memento of our Saviour's suffering as 'idolatry'? Can any intelligent person suppose that the Catholic worships the *crucifix*, and not the *Crucified?*"

Father X. "Such a gross misconception, if entertained by Protestants and Rationalists, perhaps arises from the fact that they forget how difficult it is to contemplate, and how impossible it is to visualize, God *as a Spirit.* Our finite souls require something visible and tangible on which to lean, and that is why the human life and personality of the Incarnate Son of God become so precious to us, and why the abiding Presence of Christ in the altar-tabernacle is so helpful and consoling."

Ernest. "It has been said of many authors—even of non-Catholics like George Eliot—that they have written of the influence and meaning of the Crucifixion under the inspiration given them by the sight of a crucifix standing or hanging before them."

Arnold. "I do not doubt it. You remember perhaps the story of the great theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas in regard to his devotion to this symbol of Christ's sacrifice? It is said that a stranger came one day to visit him and, astonished at the bareness of his cell, asked the eminent doctor: 'Where is your library—you, who have written so voluminously?' In reply, Saint Thomas simply pointed to his crucifix!"

On the Confessional

Father X. "I have been thinking over your difficulty in regard to the confessional, or rather the abuse of it. The supposed cases you mention of people living in habitual sin, yet going at intervals to confession *without a real intention to amend their mode of life*, are perhaps not uncommon. But those who do this are committing a grievous sin, and *they know it.*

"There may conceivably be Catholics so ignorant of the rudiments of their religion, as to imagine that an absolution, obtained by tricking the priest, is valid; but no child who knows his catechism is ignorant of the fact that, should he practise such mummery, he would not only leave the confessional unshriven, but with the added guilt of sacrilege.

"The confessional is the only tribunal before which no witness

is summoned. There the accuser and accused are one. The validity of the Sacrament does not depend upon the confessor, but on the penitent. The former is the *channel* through which sacramental grace flows, and it reaches the penitent only on certain well-defined conditions.

"It is possible to deceive the priest; but it is impossible to deceive God, who readeth the innermost recesses of the heart. The confessor can only pass judgement upon what he is told. True, he may discover the real disposition of the penitent and, if this is unsatisfactory, must refuse absolution. This is, however, an extreme measure, and it is a very common thing for the confessor to give absolution only *after* he has carefully explained the conditions under which it will take effect."

Arnold. "How often is it the duty of a Catholic to confess his sins?"

Father X. "In general, whenever he has any sin weighing on his conscience. Venial faults may not require immediate confession; but to make one's peace with God, after one has committed a mortal sin, is a matter of life and death to the soul, and should not be neglected for a single hour.

"The Church—bound to establish limits, within which all who wish to share in the benefits of Catholicity must keep—prescribes confession and communion at least once a year, at Easter.

"That marks the outside boundary of Catholic observance.

"Many people who rebel against even this amount of discipline, may still be unwilling to fall away entirely and openly from the Church, and hence such lax, indifferent souls, make a sort of house-cleaning every spring.

"What is the confessor to do in such cases? Repulse them? So long as there is a chance of awakening a torpid soul, I should say not. Sometimes men follow this course to satisfy their mothers, or their wives, or to give example to their children; sometimes out of worldly, snobbish, and even political motives. This is all very ignoble, but, alas, very human. We must not be more impatient than God is. There are tares amidst the wheat, but He does not yet apply the torch to the field.

"Remember, also, that confession, with the reception of absolution, is not only a 'duty,' as you call it, but a priceless privilege, bringing to the pardoned soul a peace that the world can neither give nor take away."

On Uncharitableness

Father X. "Do not dwell too much on the inconsistencies of others in your estimate of religion. Their misconduct is no excuse

for yours. Just as the mere contemplation of other people's virtues is not enough to bring you into the Church, so the inconsistency and even hypocrisy of the unworthy should not keep you out of it. You do not derive your faith from men, but from God. *Why then allow men to deprive you of it?* It is inevitable that scandals should arise in any organization, so long as human nature remains what it is. But woe to them by whom the scandal is given."

Ernest. "The trouble with you, Arnold, is, that you have spent too much time in the society of lukewarm Catholics, not to mention the company of the Church's avowed enemies. Henceforth you should cultivate communion with the great Catholic thinkers. Get into better Catholic society, as it were. In every nation and in every tongue you will find them, beginning, if you like, with St. Augustine and St. Thomas à Kempis, and coming down, through Bossuet, Fénelon, Châteaubriand, etc., to the great English Catholic writers of the nineteenth century. Remember that for every devil the Church can show a saint; and don't forget to look up, not down. You will soon find yourself in good company."

Father X. "At all events, each of us can and should till his own garden. First, let me know myself, and when I am master in my own house, perhaps I may become fit to be my brother's keeper."

Ernest. "Jesus described the situation perfectly in his parable of the mote and the beam. We do not need a magnifying-glass in order to discover contradictions and shortcomings in our neighbours, yet we seem to be always using one. If we would occasionally turn it on ourselves, while casting a veil of charity over those we are prone to criticize, we should do much towards reforming the Church, to say nothing of the reformation of our own souls."

Arnold. "I have often observed that the kinds of sins which are most quickly observed and most severely condemned in modern society are precisely those towards which our Lord was the most lenient, such as the various weaknesses of human nature. For these He showed a certain comprehending toleration and sympathy, which He never extended to pride, hypocrisy, malice, uncharitableness and the defrauding of widows and orphans. Pray do not think me over-indulgent towards drunkards, rakes, and harlots, for I have few illusions regarding these classes; all I contend for is that these kinds of sin are frequently the result of social conditions or hereditary taints, and they almost invariably, if persisted in, bring their own swift punishment. The sins of the flesh—gluttony, drunkenness, sensuality—although unquestionably *sins*, nevertheless seem less offensive, because they are of a lower order, and affiliated with our natural appetites. Sins of the spirit, on the contrary, are less conspicuous, require perhaps no accomplices and are of a more vicious, cruel, and deadly order, and even more surely kill the soul."

On the Doctrine of Purgatory

Arnold. "The Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, so often misunderstood by non-Catholics, appeals to me very strongly. The lack of that doctrine (so rarely accepted by Protestants) is deplorable, and often leads to the supposition that the soul of a hardened criminal, if at death repentant, enters *at once* into the presence and society of his Saviour and the Saints."

Father X. "You remember Christ's words to the penitent thief on the cross?"

Arnold. "Yes, and no doubt our Saviour's insight into the state of that man's soul justified the divine promise of an immediate entry into paradise; but that is the only instance of the kind recorded, and it would be rash to presume upon it. My point is, that an instantaneous admission of a previously evil character into the divine presence is something practically inconceivable and, even for the dying penitent himself, undesirable. Some spiritual preparation, some expiation of the evil acts committed in the period preceding repentance must be necessary, before the soul can enter heaven."

Ernest. "I quite agree with you. We know, of course, nothing of what the purgatorial state is like, nor does the Church describe it. But some spiritually cleansing process must take place before a human soul can enter the pure sphere to which God ultimately calls it."

Father X. "Few, indeed, must be the souls who leave this life in a state of purity and grace which fits them for immediate enjoyment of the Beatific Vision; still fewer, let us hope, are those to whom the blessed refuge of Purgatory—that half-way house for our dead—is closed. I cannot conceive the Protestant belief on this point, nor is it astonishing that their rejection of Purgatory has been followed by the elimination of Hell, for the latter doctrine alone is monstrous. In fact, all these Christian doctrines are interdependent: they stand or fall together. You cannot pick stones out of the arch and expect it to stand. It will not do so."

Arnold. "Purgatory seems to me to be one of the most humane and beautiful conceptions imaginable; and it is the humane note in our Lord's teaching that brings it so easily within the reach of all. The penitent thief, the woman taken in adultery, the publican who beat his breast in contrition, and St. Peter, who thrice denied, but never doubted—such are the types of humanity with which even a slight knowledge of mankind acquaints us.

"Each one of us may be, potentially, all that these sinners were; hence none need ever despair."

Ernest. "That the consoling doctrine of Purgatory should appeal to you does not surprise me; there is hardly a religious system

of antiquity in which some similar provision is not found. It was left for the Reformers of the sixteenth century to reject it. Certain abuses connected with the co-related doctrine of Indulgences, which was then provoking indignation in Germany, may have been their starting-point, but when they denied the Mass and the Sacramental system generally, Purgatory had to be discarded with the rest."

Father X. "If the souls of our dead pass instantly beyond our reach, then all our masses, prayers, requiems, and pious practices become vain! But if, on the contrary, the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, i.e. the inter-communion of the threefold Church, militant on earth, suffering in Purgatory and triumphant in Heaven, be accepted, then we on earth can influence, and be influenced by, the souls who have crossed the border."

On Humility

Ernest. "I came upon a beautiful thought to-day, admirably expressed."

Arnold. "Will you let us share it with you?"

Ernest. "With pleasure. It was this: 'The humility of intelligence is the measure of its greatness.'"

Arnold. "How one appreciates the truth of that statement, when one contrasts the modesty and humility of the truly great man, with the conceit and arrogance of the sciolist!"

Ernest. "I once witnessed personally a wonderful illustration of the transforming power of humility, which is worth relating."

Arnold. "Well, we are eager to hear it."

Ernest. "In former years, I knew a singularly brilliant man, whose verse and prose have enriched English literature, and who for several years led the life of an admired neo-pagan, fêted, famed, and flattered as few have ever been. Years later, when ruin, disgrace, and public shame had sunk him in a mire that had not even the advantage of oblivion, I encountered him one night alone in the streets of a foreign capital. He had become a Catholic. I asked him how this had come to pass, and he told me that his conversion and return to faith had been the result of meditating on Christ's words: 'Unless you be converted *and become as little children*, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven'; and he added that, although he had lived for years, intoxicated with pride, he had finally learned the transforming power of humility, and realized that, before anything spiritual can live within us, pride must die.

"As I heard him speak these words, I felt that it was not a time for criticism, but for tears. So must each one of us first discover and then conquer the particular sin that bars his way to God."

On the Principal Characteristic of Our Age

Ernest. "Yesterday I lunched with several friends, and over our Mocha we had an interesting discussion."

Arnold. "About what?"

Ernest. "About the question: What is the principal characteristic of this generation?"

Father X. "Did you agree on what it is?"

Ernest. "There was a variety of opinion. One said it was the mania for Speed; another that it was the craze for Sport; a third that it was the progress of Science; another called it the cult of the Machine; but the majority considered it the high value placed on money-getting, with its resultant luxury and vices. What would you have said, Arnold?"

Arnold. "Well, all these tendencies are certainly characteristic of our *Zeitgeist*, but I, for my part, should have given the palm to our speed-madness. Modern society has fallen a victim to Speed. We think we are its masters; in reality we are its slaves. It lashes us into haste of every kind. At our present pace we have no time for thoughts, but only for facts, news, accidents, and scandals. Life is a 'movie,' in which we are both actors and spectators. We have no leisure to reflect on what life means. Why do we buy books? To read them? No, to *wish* to read them. We honestly intend to do so, as a man intends to swim, but is dragged down by entangling sea-weeds and eventually drowned. The morning paper with its surfeit of terrestrial horrors keeps us from other literature; the Sunday printed blankets smother us with pictures and superlatives. In desperation we are often forced to take them in the form of 'tabloids' and 'digests.'"

Father X. "And that is not the worst of it. This feverish haste is the chief cause of our superficiality and is the enemy of the patient acquisition of anything worth while. It is now claimed that even learning can be gained by speeding up the methods. Spelling, for example, is now taught, not with syllabic accuracy, but by gulping the words whole. The result is seen in the illiterate scrawls with which the post insults us. Type-written letters have replaced the charming correspondence and the elegant script of former days. The fine epistolary art is lost. A swiftly moving chain of photographs, accompanied by a few printed or spoken words of explanation, is to-day our favourite diversion. No mental effort is thereby required. A novel or a play, epitomized to a scenic skeleton, is exhibited to thousands as a substitute for literature, and the spectators thenceforth feel themselves dispensed from the necessity of making any further acquaintance with the book or drama. The author's style

and the beauty of his language count for nothing. They have 'seen' Hamlet. That is enough. In the words of the old hymn,

'This world is all a *fleeting show*.'"

Arnold. "And how this deification of speed has changed our modes of life! There are still a few of us, for example, who would rather drive a handsome horse than court collisions in a motor-car; but for the vast majority such a snail-like progress is unbearable. Those who would like to drive are afraid to do so in a stream of snorting, rushing, high-power machines, amid which horses are as out of place as gondolas in the path of ocean liners.

"Conceding all that is good in motor-traffic, some of us, who object to its destructive tyranny, stand beside formerly charming roads in Europe and America with rage or sorrow in our hearts; for these once beautiful and quiet paths are practically spoiled. The great illusion of our age is to expect improvement in mentality or morals by *speed of any kind*, whether by telegraph, telephone, aeroplane, or motor-cars. On the contrary, the last-named invention is the criminal's surest means of escape, promoting and abetting robbery and murder. It all resolves itself into the question what use man makes of his new instruments."

Ernest. "That qualifies somewhat our exultation over the progress of Science."

Arnold. "Assuredly. Chemistry and electricity are the magicians of the twentieth century, but the spirits which they conjure up from the unfathomed depths of elemental mystery can prove a bane as well as blessing. It all depends upon man's choice and will, and these depend in turn upon his recognition of religion and the moral code as rules of conduct. Thus far, the powers of death created by our chemical inventions are far more threatening than their powers of life. Thousands of human lives can be at once exterminated by a whiff of poison-gas, or blown to atoms by explosives. Man is less competent to find a remedy for cancer!

"It is so in everything. We have invented machines which not only set type faster than a man can do, but subsequently redistribute the letters in their respective cases. Other mechanical monsters roll out daily many bales of printed matter, which are sent broadcast instantly to waiting millions. A blessing to humanity? That depends. Controlled by plutocrats or politicians, whose policies are propagated by their clever editors, and linked together frequently under the dominion of one man, these papers mould the minds of millions, as the potter manipulates the clay. These huge envelopes of winged words are capable of carrying in their folds spiritual bacteria, which can bring incalculable evil to individuals, families, and nations; and when those inky characters preach international

hate and war—which sometimes seem to be their speciality—there emanates from those Upas leaves a subtle poison that may ultimately cause the death of countless human beings."

Father X. "Had I been one of your symposium, I should have said that the chief characteristic of our present civilization is *restlessness*, for to that spirit all the other features mentioned can be traced. We self-complacent Occidentals do not realize it, but to thoughtful students in the East the restlessness of Europe and America seems insanity. They neither admire nor desire our mechanical, industrial, ever-changing civilization. Yet let us not on that account undervalue the immemorial calm of the Orient. From the East have come to us our religions, our noblest literatures, our system of arithmetic and much of our philosophy and art."

Arnold. "You are right. Restlessness is the master malady of the world. Everyone is afflicted with a subtle madness that renders contemplation and tranquillity impossible. We cannot even talk without gesticulating, and sometimes grimacing by way of emphasis. Our ancestors had dignity and repose of manner. They lived a life of high ideals, modest duty and elevating pleasures.

'Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.'

But where is now to be found a 'sequestered vale,' and what terrestrial way can be called noiseless?"

Ernest. "Think of our restlessness and love of change in architecture. If we have been a few years absent from a great metropolis like New York, we find it, on our return, changed beyond recognition. We are continually tearing down great buildings and replacing them with greater ones. Everything is passing, nothing permanent. Such restlessness reminds one of a sufferer from fever. He tosses wearily from side to side, changing the place, but keeping the pain.

"Dissatisfied at our inability to outstrip others in the race, we nevertheless press on, with mingled hope and bitterness in our hearts, towards some fair land of which we dream. But if we ever reach it, we are disappointed.

'Da wo ich nicht bin, da ist das Glück.'"

Arnold. "We can no longer, as our parents did, sit happily by our firesides reading or talking in family companionship. In the first place, we have no firesides; nothing but skeleton steam-radiators or artificial gas-logs. In the second place, many of us have no homes. We live in tiny cubicles on shelves in skyscrapers, extract our beds from a deceptive wall, and 'cook' in kitchenettes!

"We cannot stay in such diminutive cells continually, and hence are driven out of them at times to satisfy a yearning for we know not

what, and cannot sit still long enough to find out. Books, pictures, simple but comfortable domestic surroundings—these have long since vanished. There is no space for them in a room with a sofa-bed, The only things we cannot part with are our restless hearts. One of the saddest experiences I ever had was finding, among the effects of someone who had committed suicide, a piece of paper bearing the words: '*No home!* Believe me happier.'"

Father X. "Once in a while, when compelled to pause for lack of breath, I suppose such restless souls look back wistfully upon the road by which they came. They usually discern its earlier stages through a mist of tears, but they are unable to gaze upon it long, so anxious are they about the remaining stations of their journey, especially the last one. Sometimes they wish they had already reached this, and they envy those who 'have gone through,' particularly if they have been quick about it!

"It would be some consolation to us, if these unfortunates were really happy in their quest for pleasure. But they all looked bored. What we continually encounter is fatigue, world-weariness. The well-nigh universal lament, from old and young alike, is: 'Oh, I am so tired!' It is the penalty of the pace that kills."

Ernest. "Strange, is it not? Just when, materially speaking, we have everything, we often find that we have nothing. Pleasure palls, money cannot buy peace of soul, society has become a joyless servitude, and sensuality burns itself into satiety.

"We rarely show to others our distress, but if we did so, we should doubtless find that they, too, suffer. We have, however, tacitly agreed to smile at one another, to wear conventional masks and hide our griefs in silence; and we go on thus sadly, stoically, and unsatisfied, because . . . we think we must."

Arnold. "Society of that sort does not help us. Even Nietzsche said some good things, and one of them was this: 'Crowds are not good, even when they follow you.' I find that people who are disillusioned with humanity often give their trust and affection to a noble dog. In doing so, they are never disappointed. It is man who possesses a monopoly of treachery. Whoever heard of a quadruped playing the part of Judas? But a dog's life is, alas, so short!"

Ernest. "Before the generations which preceded us the years of old age rose like stars, lighting the path to immortality; and Joubert said beautifully: 'The evening of life brings with it its own lamps.'

"*We* have no lamps, but only dazzling electric lights. Of course, these are more brilliant, convenient, and practical, but by their garish glare we see old people trying to appear still young and dancing between the tables of restaurants!"

Arnold. "What is true of individuals is also true of nations. Degeneracy is visible in the mass, as well as in the particles composing

it. It is often precisely at the height of a nation's material prosperity that it finds itself stricken with an incurable disease.

"How many such nations and civilizations have declined and disappeared! There came a time to each of them, as there may come to us, when the crest was passed and the descent began. And why a descent? Because the fruit had begun to rot within. The nation had lost its ideals, its character, its God, and finally its soul."

Father X. "What is it, then, that we need? Most of us do not know. No sooner do we acquire something which we thought we needed, than we find it worthless. Meanwhile, how many remedies we try! How many forms of religion we investigate! How many sectarian nostrums are weighed in the balances, and found wanting!

"We are like birds, lost in the tempest, which dash themselves against the glass of any brilliant lighthouse they discern; or else, like weather-beaten mariners, we long for a safe and quiet harbour, in which to lower our sails, tattered by hurricanes and saturated with the brine of bitterness. But where shall we find such a harbour?"

Arnold. "There are many in search of it."

Father X. "You have perhaps no idea how many people—some of them non-Catholics—retire once or twice a year into some cloister for a period of spiritual rest, even if only for a few days, just to escape from the sin, the rush, and turmoil of the outer world. It has become for many weary souls a necessity."

Ernest. "And to what do you ascribe this?"

Father X. "To *Restlessness*, for restlessness means *seeking*."

Arnold. "Seeking for what?"

Father X. "*Seeking for God.* Our age is restless because it has no faith. The world has become to a great extent godless. Christendom has become dechristianized. We are like orphaned children unconsciously yearning for our Father. We are suffering from the realization of His loss. Our century is dying from spiritual starvation. The emptiness of our souls can never be filled with the husks of this world. We may deny the existence of this emptiness, but when we wake at night and face the darkness and the thought of the inevitable, we know that it is true. We may drug ourselves temporarily into unconsciousness by opiates or by the hypnotism of the passing show, but behind the noisy stage there stands a silent figure waiting for our exit. It is our famished soul. From that companionship we can never escape. It begs us to give to it religion, fellowship with God. The peaceful harbour which it longs for is the only Church that can offer it unchanging doctrine, unity, universality, and authority."

Arnold. "I can only say in the wonderful words of St. Augustine, 'Too late have I known Thee, O Thou Ancient Truth; too late have I found Thee, O Thou First and Only Fair; for Thyself

Thou hast created us, O God, and our hearts are restless, till they rest in Thee.' "

On the Catholic Church

Ernest. "I believe in the divine government of the world, and I am convinced that the Catholic Church most truly and fully embodies that idea. Her system most humanizes God and most divinizes man; it offers a doctrine which can and does adapt itself to the needs of all, for it offers allegories and imagery to children and to simple minds, and also the loftiest philosophy to higher intellects, while its sublime hopes and tender consolations are for all. Moreover, no other Church can show the three combined notes of *verity*, *sanctity*, and *universality;* in fact, no other Church or religion has ever ventured to put forth so stupendous a claim as hers. Every other Christian organization bears some national, local, or humanly devised characteristic that limits and deprives it of the note of Catholicity. It is true, there can be no absolute identity of *understanding*, even inside the Catholic Church, since each of us is an individual and no two intelligences are identically the same. Hence in the Catholic Church, the intellectually superior must tolerate the simplicity of the less learned, and this makes possible the close association of dissimilar human elements within our fold. Within the spiritual city as within an earthly one, each inhabitant must forgo something for the benefit of the rest."

Father X. "May I add something to your noble tribute to our Mother Church? *Social* and *spiritual* solidarity are two different things. The former is peculiar to Protestantism, because that body is sectarian. It is absent in the Catholic Church because of the latter's universality. There is no particular type of mind or variety of human temperament which can be described as *Catholic*, since Catholics are of all races, nations, and languages, and of every social and intellectual grade. The same is true even of our clergy. We receive from all of them sacramental ministrations, but we do not, necessarily, on that account, always live in social intercourse with them. This does not mean in the least that we are socially better than they, or they than we. In reality, the Catholic Church, while a hierarchy, is spiritually a most perfect specimen of democracy. Prince, peasant, and pauper kneel side by side at the altar-rail to receive the Body and the Blood of their common Lord."

Ernest. "That is a fine distinction between social and spiritual solidarity. I have formed many very close and valuable friendships based upon religious sympathy, but I have not always chosen my friends because of their religious belief. With many of my co-religionists, much as I admire and even venerate them, I do not

specially care to establish social relations. I hope to see more of them in the kingdom of Heaven, if they will consent to notice me there; but on this earth I sometimes find intimacy with them somewhat difficult."

Father X. "The rule of St. Ignatius possesses the exclusive secret of preserving individuality while cultivating a type, and in no Order does one find such variety of personality and, at the same time, such a distinct and universal stamp. In sensational novels and in controversial writings, Jesuits are often represented as moving furtively about the world in disguises, etc.; but as a matter of fact, nobody, who has ever known even a few of them, can fail to recognize one after a few minutes' conversation. The 'Jesuit' of fiction was a creation of Pascal and Dumas. I have known scores of them in every clime and of every nationality, and I have yet to meet one who corresponds in the least to the great Frenchmen's presentment of them.

"It is the Order's peculiar privilege and glory to be the most hated and incessantly combated of the clergy. Perhaps this is in answer to the prayers of St. Ignatius, who desired that his followers should be persecuted, since his Divine Master was their model. But in the natural order of things, I should say they are the most hated because they are the most feared, and men hate what they fear."

Arnold. "And why are they so feared?"

Ernest. "Because they are the *corps d'élite* of the Church Militant. Called into being to combat the Reformation, they have naturally been the *bête noire* of Protestantism. Not one of the Protestant movements to 'reform' Catholicism has ever succeeded. They all go to pieces, while the Catholic Church stands fast—the one real nucleus, or life-centre of Christendom, from which a never-dying vitality radiates to all who are in communion with it.

"The moment that the communication with the Church is cut, the severed fragment flies off into space, and no matter how much noise or flash the separation may make, the disconnected piece is more or less rapidly disintegrated and disappears; but the great mass, the Church, the vehicle of truth, remains.

"It is precisely because Catholicism thus abides that ceaseless efforts are still made to change it or destroy it; and thus it is that the Catholic Church is always a 'Church Militant.'"

On the "Church Militant"

Father X. "The Church Militant is not a meaningless name, it is an accurately descriptive title; for the Church's existence is an

unceasing conflict. There were ages when the Church triumphed to a large extent, and when the public conscience of Christendom was Christian. In those days, religion rebuked Kings and States, restricted the exercise of brutal force, fed the hungry and protected the weak. We have been glibly told a thousand times that those days —the 'Dark Ages'—were past. Well, are they? Did the world ever need a *spiritual court of ultimate appeal* more than it does to-day?

"From the universal jurisdiction of the Pope, Christendom fell away in the sixteenth century; and in the seventeenth, Louis XIV could truthfully say: '*L'Etat, c'est moi*,' while in England the same sentiment was voiced in 'The King can do no wrong.' Then, after the French Revolution, came Napoleon to reconstruct Europe, and the first force he reached for was the Church. There has been much controversy over his religious opinions and sincerity; but whatever he may have personally believed, he saw the value of the support and friendship of Catholicism, and he negotiated with the Pope. The outcome was not especially satisfactory, but at least religion was again recognized and its organization and practice were once more allowed."

Arnold. "But was the result a success?"

Ernest. "Of course not. In spite of a 'Concordat,' Church and State are always at variance, even in Catholic countries."

Arnold. "What do you mean by *Catholic* countries?"

Father X. "You may well ask that. Strictly speaking, there are none; there are countries in which the vast majority of the inhabitants *profess* the Catholic religion, but there is not one, the laws of which are based on Catholic principles, or whose Governments are conducted by men who conform to them.

"In France, the Concordat gave to the State the nomination of bishops, and their installation or investiture only to the Pope. The result, of course, was that the French episcopate was, for years, filled with the Government's candidates, who were rarely men whom any Pope or any Catholic people would have chosen.

"The effect of this on religion was terrible. I remember one period when no less than nine bishoprics in France were vacant, because Leo XIII could not and would not accept the Government's nominees. Finally, the rupture of the Concordat was provoked by the notorious cases of three French bishops whom the Pope had suspended and summoned to Rome; the Government, however, sustained and kept in office the recalcitrant prelates, and declared that the Pope, by acting thus, had violated the Concordat. And so it went on, till the rupture came. But the Pope won in the end, and the three bishops were all excluded from their seats."

Arnold. "How will it turn out with Mussolini's similar attempt?"

Ernest. "If you ask me, I think that the reconciliation of the

Italian Government with the Vatican was a master-stroke on the Duce's part. He wanted Catholic support and world-applause, and he obtained both ; and it was far more cleverly done than the violent act of Napoleon. But will it last ? "

Father X. " That depends largely on his attitude toward the religious education of the young. The Church demands uncompromisingly that Italy's children shall receive religious instruction in the public schools, and there not from lay-teachers but from priests. The Fascist Government wishes, on the contrary, to control all education and even to decide what kind of religious instruction shall be given. The two positions are incompatible."

Ernest. " Pope Leo I repelled Attila ; Gregory VII forced Henry IV to come to Canossa ; Pius VII proved finally stronger than Napoleon, and Leo XIII defeated Bismarck in the Kulturkampf. You will see that Pius XI will never yield to the Fascist regime the control of Italy's children in religious education."

Father X. " The fault is not the Holy Father's. Many difficulties arising between Church and State are said by our enemies to be the fault of the former. But in reality they do not originate from the Church herself but, on the contrary, from *secular interference in ecclesiastical affairs.* It is often said by thoughtless people that the Church seeks to meddle in the affairs of State. Just the contrary is the fact. *It is the State that seeks to use the Church's influence in secular affairs.* Failing that, they attack, persecute, rob, and suppress her. Leo XIII masterfully traced the respective boundaries of the spiritual and the secular powers, and if each would keep within its own domain, there would be no friction."

Ernest. " One oftens hears about the ' breakdown of Christianity,' and that ' Christianity has proved a failure.' But certainly *Catholic Christianity* has proved nothing of the sort ; it stands immutably where it has always stood, and the Pope speaks in the sphere of Faith and Morals with authority, as Popes have ever spoken. If the peoples close their ears, out-shout him and rush to destruction, it seems to me that everything else may have failed, but the Church, assuredly not. The Church has never yielded its right to teach the Gospel, and will never yield it. I am proud of it and I thank God every day that I am a Catholic."

Arnold. " The sky is not without clouds. In spite of the reconciliation and the Lateran treaty, I see in the European press occasional attacks upon the Vatican's policy, against which the Holy Father has emphatically protested."

Father X. " We must expect such things. The attacks upon religion are unceasing ; sometimes they are open, but oftener subtle and disguised under professions of zeal for the ' reform of abuses.' In the sixteenth century ' liberty of conscience ' was the cry ; in the

seventeenth 'reason and the rights of man'; in the nineteenth 'science' was to replace religion, and in the beginning of the twentieth came the cult of materialism and frank mammon-worship, of which we are already reaping the fruits."

Ernest. "Of course, the Church *must* be conservative. She has a teaching mission, and therefore must possess a visible organization and an audible voice. She has, moreover, an apostolic deposit of truth, confided to her at the outset, and this it is her duty to proclaim. She cannot drift, or change her course, to suit the ebb and flow of all the varied currents of human speculation. While conceding, academically and speculatively, the largest measure of intellectual freedom of research, she nevertheless abides and must abide by her exclusive teaching-privileges in the sphere of faith and morals. If for a moment she should abdicate one jot or tittle of her claims, she would sink to the level of the schismatic and heretical bodies, from which authoritative teaching and discipline have long since vanished."

Father X. "Contrary to what we might have expected under such political and social conditions as now prevail, there have been very few notable apostasies from the Catholic Church. If there had been any worth mentioning, our enemies would surely have made the most of them."

Ernest. "Yes, the moment that a noted Catholic layman, or especially a priest, and, above all, a prelate, falls into a controversy with Rome over any conceivable matter, the Rationalists and Protestants flock to his defence. Among these anti-Catholics one sees the strangest people hob-nobbing fraternally. The cause of the 'heretic' becomes the cause of 'liberty' against papal oppression; he is urged to write a book—and usually does; he is supplied with money, invited to lecture, and is everywhere fêted and applauded by people who know and care nothing about the causes of the trouble. The Modernists—Loisy, Père Hyacinthe, the Abbé Klein, Döllinger, and others—were the latest examples of this; but where are they now? The moment they ceased to serve as a bludgeon with which to hammer the Pope, their sympathisers fell away, and they were left to their obscurity.

"Did you ever, by the by, read Paul Bourget's *Le Démon du Midi*, which treats of this subject? If you can procure it, you will find it interesting."

Closing In

Ernest. "Perhaps the most awe-inspiring fact which confronts us, as we advance in life, is that of the isolation of the human soul. How absolutely alone each one of us is, even in this life! And when

we go out of it, we go alone. Each of us, too, must make the great decision for himself.

"It seems to me that what you, Arnold, have to determine now is what your soul is really craving for. Something—whatever it may be—is working within you, for certainly you are free from outside influences. *What is it that you seek?* When you have decided that question, another presents itself: '*Where can I find it?*' When you have satisfied yourself that you will find what is necessary for your soul's peace and ultimate salvation within the Catholic Church, then your last obstacle will disappear.

"That difficulties present themselves to us at such a time is undeniable, but they do not warrant our setting ourselves up as final judges of dogmatic truth. Saul was called, while on the road to Damascus, to be an apostle to the Gentiles and to preach the Christ, whose followers he had persecuted, but he responded at once, without waiting to adjust to his entire satisfaction all the Christian doctrines, which we might well suppose would have conflicted seriously with his previous views as a Roman citizen and a Pharisee. Whether he afterwards experienced difficulty in reconciling these things with one another, we have never heard. He did not, however, hesitate a moment, but cried: 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' He also received the grace of faith in response to his appeal. Faith is not knowledge, and our Lord defined it as meritorious for precisely that reason, when He said: 'Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed,' thus disposing of St. Thomas and his spiritual progeny, who demand material proofs before believing."

Father X. "Knowledge is not everything. The mystery of life eludes us, but *the secret of living we may learn.* In fact, if we do not conform our lives to our belief, we end by conforming our belief to our lives. Every man then becomes his own god and his own source of inspiration, independent of revelation and authority. You have lived for years amidst Catholic surroundings and are familiar with all aspects of the external Church, the grand and historical, as well as the simple and spiritual; but in all that time apparently you never until now discovered that the Church had any message for *you.* Now, however, *the call has come.*

"Many and fervent prayers are daily offered in your behalf, but the answer must be left to God . . . and to you. My mind is too practical to be troubled by the kind of doubts you describe as disturbing yours. If the Catholic religion can do for you what you cannot do for yourself; if it can achieve what no other religious system even claims to be able to achieve, but what the Church affirms that it *can and will achieve;* and if millions of illustrious witnesses testify that it *has* done this for them, then I think you should unhesitatingly submit yourself to Catholic authority."

A Greeting

"*Dear Arnold:* Letters bring me the welcome news that you and your wife have fulfilled your intentions. It is the *dies magna* of your lives. To say that I rejoice with you would express but inadequately the feelings of thanksgiving and satisfaction with which these tidings fill my heart. This event is not an unfamiliar one to me, but for some obscure and intangible reason your entrance into the Catholic Church seems to have for me a novel significance. That it will lift you into a new spiritual atmosphere, I have no doubt. You have reached the goal by long and devious paths, and you have taken this important step in response to some impelling force, and not without an intellectual struggle. That was to be expected. *Palmam non sine pulvere.*

"You tell me that now, every time you kneel in prayer before the Divine Presence in the church, whose doors are always open for the sinful, the weary and the heavy-laden, you come away with a peace of soul and a strengthened faith that transform the world. Ah! what would it be if all humanity could be thus aided and uplifted!

"Believe me, the feeling you describe at the celebration of your first Sunday Mass, when you found yourselves as Catholics for the first time in absolute harmony with the service, is not mere emotionalism, or the enthusiasm of youth, or that parody of it—second childhood.

It is the joy of the awakened soul coming consciously into its long-lost birthright. You have, if I may so express it, been swept upon a flood-tide of divine grace over the reefs into the safe harbour. The storm from without may perhaps follow you, but it cannot harm you, anchored as you are in the peace that passeth the understanding of the world.

"You will, I am sure, find many more aids to a spiritual life in the Catholic Church than in the closed-all-the-week non-Catholic churches, with their arid services relieved by worldly music and by that solitary stimulus—the sermon, which is often of an irreligious character, and which may be in agreement with, or opposed to, your own creed.

"The Church will do for you what you cannot do for yourself. She possesses the treasury of inspired truth, she holds the keys and she has the keeping of souls. Everyone outside her fold is like a lonely traveller in an unknown land, without guide or compass.

"The Mass and the Real Presence shine like precious jewels in the darkness of this evil world, and your souls, so long spiritually starved and stunted, will aspire towards them, as an impoverished plant puts forth its leaves and tendrils towards the blessed light.

"You may find imperfections and inconsistencies among your fellow-Catholics, for 'we have this treasure in earthen vessels,' but

these will be the exceptions, and will not poison the wells of Christian truth, of which the Church is the guardian.

"After forty years of agnosticism, you have entered the fold of Mother Church with humility—the surest passport to her blessings. All difficulties have not vanished, but they will do so, and will find their solution, if not in this life, in the life eternal."—*Ernest.*

BENEDICTINE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
240.22[illegible]T C001
TWELV[illegible]RS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH NEW
[illegible]2811 00008 6811